The Ashura Ritual:
An Alchemical Study of Suffering in Shi'ism

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Abstract

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This study explores symbols of a religious ritual called Ashura in Twelver Shi'ite Islam. It provides a look into these symbol's unconscious power at work in the suffering of the participants. The ritual's ceremonial rites are compared with the three stages of alchemy: the *nigredo*, the *albedo*, and the *rubedo*. Through these processes, using hermeneutical approaches, Shi'ite cosmology and beliefs are examined and compared with depth psychology. Hence, the study also contributes to depth psychology a Shi'ite way of experiencing inner spirituality. The central theme of this study is the phenomena of *al-bātin* (the esoteric). In Shi'ism, *al-bātin* is the soul's journey to find the metaphysical Adam and Eve within the *tawhid* (oneness) of a person. The study starts with defining the terms and background of the ritual. The alchemical stages that correspond with the participant's conscious states are examined. The study provides a symbolic understanding of Fatimah and Ali, the two main archetypal persons that express their unique powers in the mourning rites of the ritual. The final aim is to understand the Shi'ite concept of the *walayah* (guardianship) and its metaphysical consciousness associated with C. G. Jung's notion of the *unus mundus*. This study concludes by articulating a way to see the world from the inner vision of depth psychology and Shi'ism in dialogue.

Keywords: shi'ism, ashura, ritual, alchemy, archetypal, suffering

Dedication

In memory of my mother: Syeda Shahnaz Abidi

In memory of my grandfather: Syed Asghar Hussain

and

To my father: Syed Rafiq Hyder Abidi

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786

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Table of Contents

Part 1: Orientation of a Ritual Study....1

Chapter 1 1

Introduction 1

Research Topic 1

Research Purpose 5

Significance of the Research....12

A Brief Background of Shi'ism....13

The Story of Karbala 25

From Karbala to Ashura....27

Definitions of Major Terms and Concepts....30

Archetypes....30

Complex 32

Depth psychology 34

Individuation....35

Karbala 37

Muharram....37

Shi'a 38

Stages of Alchemy 38

Symbols....50

Symbols According to Jung's Psychology 51

Symbols According to Shi'ism 55

The Symbolic 64

Transference/Countertransference 65

Transcendent Function 66

The Researcher's Relationship to the Topic 68

The Relevance of the Topic for Depth Psychology 77

Observing the Ashura ritual 79

A Deeper understanding of Islamic symbols and Shi'ite cosmology 80

Statement of the Research Problem and Methodology 82

The Imaginal: An Approach and a Realm 95

Research Questions 98

Chapter 2 99

Literature Review 99

The Ashura Ritual and Shi'ite Cosmology 99

Traditional historical texts 99

Contemporary texts on Shi'ism 103

Henry Corbin 107

Depth Psychology 110

The Need for Research on the Topic 115

Chapter 3 116

Research Methodology and Procedures 116

Research Approach 116

Research Methodology 125

Alchemical Hermeneutics 127

Spiritual Hermeneutics 130

Research Area and Time 135

Alchemy 145

A method for the soul 145

The struggle for perfection in the womb 150

Metaphysics of imagination 153

A bridge to and from: A nonlinear method 156

Research Procedures 163

Ethical Considerations 165

Part 2: Voices and Visions in the Temple of Darkness 166

Chapter 4 166

The *Nigredo*: The Lesser Work of the Ritual 166

Auditory Imagination 166

Fatimah *al-Zehra* (The Pure) 168

Reenactment of Death and Rebirth in the Ritual 178

Zaynab *al Kubra* (The Great).....189

Chapter 5 194

The *Albedo*: The Lesser Work of the Ritual 194

Luna's Visionary Function.....194

Voices to Visions: Embodying the Spirit 203

Visualizing Imagination.....207

Synthesis of the Lesser Work.....215

Chapter 6 219

The *Rubedo*: The Greater Work of the Ritual.....219

Unio Mentalis.....225

"Our" Mercurius. 226

Imam Ali: The Gateway of Knowledge. 229

Imam's Relationship to Christ. 230

Imam as the Center Point (*Nuqta*). 232

Unio Mentalis with the Body.....238

Imam Hussain: Embodying the Tension. 247

Unus Mundus 257

Chapter 7 265

Conclusion.....265

Diagrams 270

References 279

The style used throughout this dissertation is in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Edition, 2009), and *Pacifica Graduate Institute's Dissertation Handbook* (2019–2020).

Part 1: Orientation of a Ritual Study

Chapter 1

Introduction

Research Topic

Humans suffer. Is suffering a state of being, a fantasy, or a manifestation of something? When we listen to the sorrowful melody of a flute or read a poem by Rumi, something happens inside. The routine occupation of our mind goes to a deeper place. Just thinking about death or war, for instance, makes a person experience psychological tension. I can name a few words that point to the field of suffering such as relationship, desire, jealousy, expectation, obsession, insecurity, loneliness, fear, and worrying. But why do we suffer? What is the purpose of it? Does it have a purpose?

Muslims see the phenomena of suffering from two viewpoints: 1) punishment for sin and evil, and 2) test of faith or belief. From the second point of view, Corbett (2015) writes that "suffering in the service of God is commendable, it builds character, enhances spiritual development, and will be rewarded either in this world or the next. . ." (p. 210). Concerning this positive aspect, this study aims to explore and understand suffering from the spiritual tradition of Shi'ism, an esoteric branch of Islam. In pursuit of this, my research identifies and evaluates, using depth psychology and medieval alchemy, two archetypal powers at work in the Ashura ritual: love and knowledge.

Ashura is a ritual of suffering. Ashura means the 10th day of the first month of the Islamic calendar: Muharram 61 AH/October 10, 680 CE. In Shi'ism, Ashura means a yearly observance and remembrance conducted as a dramatic passion play that

commemorates and celebrates the martyrdom of Hussain ibn Ali (a.s),[1] the second grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). An important day of atonement, Ashura is also called *Hosay* in Trinidad, Guyana, and Jamaica, and *Tabuik* or *Tabut* in Indonesia. In this dissertation, I am using the term Ashura to signify a traditional annual gathering, an event that carries many ritualistic forms among most Shi'as in Iran, Iraq, India, and Pakistan. In Shi'ism, Ashura is a funeral par excellence.

Hussain is an important figure in Shi'ite Islam because he is one of five special people in the Household of the Prophet (*Ahl al Bayt*). Shi'a Muslims consider him the third Imam, or spiritual leader. The first Shi'ite Imam was Hussain's father, the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, Ali ibn Abu Talib (a.s), who was the fourth caliph. While praying, Ali was assassinated because of political unrest in the Islamic community. Ali married Fatimah (a.s), the Prophet's only biological daughter with his first wife, Khadija (a.s). The second Imam, Hassan ibn Ali (a.s), Hussain's older brother, was poisoned. These are the five special persons called *panjathan pak* in Shi'ism—Muhammad, Ali, Fatimah, Hassan, and Hussain. They are mentioned in the verse of the Qur'an called *Tat-heer,* or purified (Q. 33:33),[2] according to Shi'ite doctrines.

This qualitative study attempts to illustrate that in the ritual processes exemplified by Ashura, Shi'a participants or devotees, through guidance and examples of the *Ahl al Bayt*, renew their moral consciousness by removing worldly obstacles and attaining nearness to God.

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[1] In this document, *a.s* means *Ale as-Salam* in Arabic, which means "peace and blessings be upon you". It is mentioned in reverence to any prophet, Imam, or angel figure. Also (pbuh) is used for the Prophet of Islam, which means "peace be upon him".

[2] All translations of the Qur'an in this document are by Arberry (1995).

Ashura commemorates the tragedy that led to Hussain's martyrdom on the plains of Karbala, Iraq (680 CE).

Hyder (2006) explained that for millions of Muslims, this event "has left an indelible symbolic mark on devotional practices, on the transmissions of Islamic history, and on subsequent developments in aesthetics, mysticism, and reform movements throughout the Muslim world" (p. 3). Imam Hussain's martyrdom is therefore celebrated on the Day of Ashura and is recognized by all Muslims, both Shi'ite and Sunnis. Ashura's extreme ritualistic forms (*ghulūw*), which include excessive veneration for saints (especially Ali and Hussain), mourning, weeping, walking on fire, and self-flagellation rites, are observed and practiced only by Shi'a Muslims.

This work does not represent a comprehensive study of Shi'ism; rather, it delineates and focuses on the belief system of Twelver Shi'ites (*ithnā 'ashariyyah*), which corresponds to the number of Imams who came as Muhammad's successors legitimately in the eyes of God after the Prophet's death. According to the Shi'ite belief (*aqidah*), they are vicegerents of God's message for humanity.

Generally, in Islam, an imam is a person who leads prayer in a mosque. The term *imam*, in Arabic, is a singular pronoun, a title, or a position given to a person that means leader. Although many rulers in Islamic history gave themselves this title from a worldly point of view, in both Sunni and Shi'ite branches of Islam,[3] Imams are considered as having a higher spiritual position (*maqām*) by possessing a sacred knowledge of the Qur'an, *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet *and* previous Imams), jurisprudence, philosophy, and esoteric sciences.

[3] See Nasr, 2000 (chapter 6), "Sunnism and Shi'ism—Twelver-Imam Shi'ism and Islā'īlism."

Muslims recognize imams as religious scholars and authorities who have established a particular school of thought or sect (*madhhab*) in Islam. Four major sects in Sunni jurisprudence or *sharia* are named after their imams: (a) Hanafi, (b) Hanbali, (c) Sha'afi, and (d) Maliki. In Shi'ism, however, because imams hold a spiritual position on earth—that is, an *inner and higher* sphere of existence, they are, as Pelly (1879) noted, "sovereign pontiffs, and . . . in their inalienable right to the caliphate comprises the most important article of faith of Islam" (p. vi).

Imamate, or *walayah* in Shi'a thought, is a term of interiorization that means to come after something, and when an act of a person or an event is seen outwardly, it comes from within; it represents divine intention, love, wisdom, and justice.

Walayah in Shi'ite cosmology is that "nowhere" space within, which is also an objective realm of existence and experience. The outer dimension of *walayah* is termed prophecy. That is why an Imam, as a Monad of the inner space, the possessor of a *hierotopy* (sacred ontological space), is closer to the divine angelic realm of multiple luminosities (*scintillae*). It is a pleroma or a field. Consequently, *walayah* is the central concept in Shi'ism, and, according to Henry Corbin (as cited by Nasr, 1988), "Imam is the object of *walayah*" (p. 168).

In Shi'ite thought, true caliphs in earthly time are the Imams. They are certain descendants of the Prophet Muhammad who are looked upon as the legitimate authorities, rightly guided political leaders, and successors within the Islamic community. The most important function of an Imam in Shi'ite cosmology, however, is to interpret for humanity the Qur'an and hadith of the Prophet. More importantly, Imams are the

spiritual guides who have attained the highest degree of sanctity. They are the "axis of religion" (*Qutb*, or mystical Pole) and thus have an outer to inner dimension (Nasr, 1988).

For all Muslims, the belief in prophecy (*nabuwwah*) requires that God has appointed exemplary individuals as prophets and messengers to reveal His message on earth to guide humanity. However, for Shi'a Muslims, the position of these individuals on earth derives from a higher spiritual world, the world of *walayah*. The latter is a theophanic realm very close to God. And so, the office of vicegerency (*khulafā*) is appointed and handed down by God Himself to His close friends (*awlīyā*) first, then via prophets (*nabi*) who are also messengers (*rasūl*), to make sure that His revealed commands are practiced by humans accordingly. As a result, Imams are guardians of the Holy Book (*Al Kitāb*)—in the realm of *walayah* because they are residents of this space of *hierotopy*—and possess deeper meanings of its text, the Qur'an, on earth.

The old Shi'a masters such as Haydar Amuli (d. 1385) often used the metaphor of an almond nut to describe the relationship of humans to *nabuwwah* (prophecy) and *walayah* (Imamate). The human world was pictured as the outer shell. Within the shell is the seed that corresponded to the prophecy. *Walayah* represented the essential spirit within the seed—its natural oil or perfume (see Figure 11).

Research Purpose

Through this research, I explore the function of Imam Hussain in light of the concept of the prophetic sciences of Imamology because it is important to understand the role of Imams in Shi'ite cosmology. Psychologically, an imam (with a lower-case *i*)[4] plays a crucial outer to inward function for ritual participants.

[4] imam with a lower-case *i*, in this study, means an image of the Imam within the psyche of a person.

As I see Ashura, the rites are not addressing God directly; rather, they seem to establish a relationship with those who are near to God, the Imams. For Shi'a Muslims, Imams are symbols of a complete or perfect human being (*insān kāmil*); they represent the logos in the flesh, the child archetype, or *masūm* (innocence, immaculate, without sin). In Twelver Shi'ism, Imams are the 12 infallibles.

A key premise of this study is that, for Shi'as, only the Imams can interpret the Qur'an and hadith in their proper esoteric methodologies. This notion harkens back to Christ, and C. G. Jung's method of explaining the meaning of Christ symbolically—as an image of an inner, psychological reality in every person. Contrary to the exoteric—that is, outward practices such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and *hajj* or pilgrimage, Imamology in Shi'ism comprises one of the five principles or roots of faith (*usūl al-dīn*); the others are as follows: (a) *tawhīd* (oneness of God), (b) *nubuwwah* (prophecy), (c) *ma'ad* (eschatology), and (d) '*adl* (justice). Because these are similar to Christology in Gnosticism, I see Imamology as rooted in the gnostic-alchemical symbolism explored by Jung.

Like Christology, the reality of the personal imam symbolically stands between God's revealed message and humanity. The universal Imam extends like a bridge between the macrocosm and the human microcosm. Similarly, in depth psychology, a symbol stands between the unconscious and conscious aspects of the psyche (see Figure 12). The Imam as a symbol is grasped in the human mind as a person. This is an esoteric factor in both depth psychology and the Shi'ite cosmology because that distinguishes them from those features of the exoteric psychologies such as behaviorism and Sunni orthodoxy. This esoteric perspective, an awareness of the unity

of opposites, *coincidentia oppositorum*—the transcendent and ineffable expressed in time, in a symbol, in a person—is the pivotal move for understanding the heart of Ashura.

The Imamate symbology in this dissertation brings forward a way of interpretation (*ta'wil*). *Ta'wil* is a method of knowing by imagination or spiritual hermeneutics. It is a two-way process, a mediating process, which I hope my research will show. This two-way process of being and knowing in Shi'ite thought comes from the unseen divine Intellect and from the human intelligence that takes part in the divine Intellect (*'arif bi-'Llah*, or knower by God). But this divine Intellect is filtered through mediating beings, the angels of knowledge and love. Therefore, many kinds of intelligences are present in human experience. Philosophers use many terms to denote them such as spirit, soul, will, mind, reason, or consciousness.

In the Shi'ite notion of *tawhid*, only one Intellect or Consciousness exists—the Absolute, the All-Knower. This divine Intellect (*intellectus sanctus*) corresponds to the Self archetype or *imago dei* in Jung's psychology. It acts in the human as an angel person, a messenger, who participates in degrees or modes of existence (*modus essendi*) and experiences states of knowing (*modus cognoscendi*)—as it differentiates, separates, or manifests itself in the phenomenal world (*zāhir*) from the hidden unmanifest world (*bātin*). The old alchemists saw this process in their vessels when they performed the operations of *separatio* (Latin for separation or division). In exploring the alchemy of Ashura, this study discusses Shi'ite psychology and gnosis using alchemical images of *separatio* (the plight of humanity), *coniunctio* (union), *solutio* (solution), and so on, as they relate to the tragedy of Karbala.

Phenomenologically, I view the Karbala tragedy as a specific tragedy in history. In it, I see the human potential for destruction (*separatio*). This latter is the reason for my focus that crosses beyond the historical event to analyze it as an expression of an archetypal pattern. For instance, although the ancient Greeks wrote many plays about these patterns in their own specific events in time, they can be viewed as examples of *mimesis* and *catharsis* that point to certain meanings at work in human affairs as described in Aristotle's *Poetics*. The significance of the inner aspect of the tragedy cannot be dismissed.

Karbala is the only tragedy in the Islamic world with religious, mythic, ethical, and political overtones. Further, Karbala is the only tragedy that speaks to the Shi'ite soul because it evokes *the* archetypal tragedy. For Shi'a Muslims, it is the tragedy of all tragedies.

The question Shi'a believers bear in mind as a contextual thread not only in observing rituals but also in their creative scholarly practice is: What is the archetypal tragedy?

Tragedies grip people, giving them a moment to reflect. They stop individuals from moving ever so fast in their virtual lives. They force humans to look at their condition concretely by reminding them not just of the past, but also of their shared archetypal past, which is always in the present, in the now.

Mostly, tragedies instill humility.

In Shi'ism, this presence of humility is the angelic (*malakūt*) potential in the human soul. And this past is archetypally present in the Ashura ritual. In the mind of the Shi'ite believer, by actualizing the archetypal potential of the presence of the past

in the drama of life, the tragedy of Karbala holds a power that prompts their belief in knowing that suffering is essential for self-understanding.

Suffering leads not only to the understanding of the angelic pleroma but *is* also the angelic process of transformation. Besides this, tragedy falls in the hellish domain of the soul's world.

Of course, the irony about suffering is that people may unconsciously believe in their happy convictions. Based on projections, they do not realize their own inflated existence. A person can be suffering based on an illusion of knowing or loving (Edinger, 1972).

The answer to the question of what the archetypal tragedy is, then, is: the loss of imagination or soul, or in Jung's (1951/1968a) words, "ego-consciousness . . . differentiated," to a point of alienation (p. 24). It is as if a divorce happens between the ego and the unconscious.

When this "divorce" happens, I do not mean to say that the ego is completely cut off from the unconscious ontologically. Dr. Dylan Hoffman stresses this point, that "the ego thinks it is the sole reality, but this is because it is unconscious of or in denial of its inclusion in a larger totality" (personal communication, 2021). Though Jungians[5] see the ego as a subjective center, it is always a part of the unconscious Self, the center of objective identity, and never completely conscious (Edinger, 1972). Because the ego can never be completely separated from the Self in Jung's psychology, this divorce of the ego with the Self happens epistemologically. Jung (1954/1969h) writes:

[5] The term "Jungians" in this document does not necessarily mean that which is according to Jung. It means those individuals who interpret Jung's work.

> The term "self" seemed to me a suitable one for this unconscious substrate, whose actual exponent in consciousness is the ego. The ego stands to the self as the moved to the mover, or as object to subject, because the determining factors which radiate out from the self surround the ego on all sides and are therefore supraordinate to it. The self, like the unconscious, is an *a priori* existent out of which the ego evolves. It is, so to speak, an unconscious prefiguration of the ego. It is not I who create myself, rather I happen to myself. (p. 259)

Elsewhere Jung (1943/1969i) emphasizes that "indeed our consciousness does not create itself—it wells up from unknown depths" (pp. 569-570).

However, the ego tends to completely alienate itself. We can see this in those—Muslims or Jungians—who believe in their own dogmatic perspectives without any regard for the Other. They tend to be one-sided in their intellectual polemics. Some Muslim scholars specializing in the Kalam school (*mutakallimūn*), and Mu'tazilites, believe that God is outside His creation (*tanzih*), and that is all.[6] And some Jungians not only believe that Jung's psychology is the authoritative science of individuation, but also interpret Jung's notion of the ego to be a separate entity from the Self. This is the reason why Kingsley (2018) writes "that the real person suffering from a state of inflatedness here is the faithful Jungian. . ." (p. 251).[7]

Many people misread Jung's notion of the ego to be a separated body from the totality of the psyche without being anchored to the angelic world. It is interesting to note therefore that the Self here is not meant the totality of consciousness and the

[6] See Chittick, 2000, pp. 138-144; Chittick, 2007, pp. 225-227 on the possibility of encountering God.

unconscious, rather, it is seen by some Jungians as separate from the ego subject. When the ego is cut off completely from the Self, a sort of Cartesian dualism occurs. On the one hand, according to Cheetham (2003), the ego falls into nihilism, and on the other hand, inflation is a product when the ego "identifies with the Self" (Samuels, Shorter, & Plaut, 1986, p. 82). This is the greatest sin in Islam called *shirk*.

However, Samuels, Shorter, and Plaut (1986) remind us about inflation and the *telos* of differentiation, that "this is a form of hybris, and individuation is not possible since there is no longer any differentiation between person and God-image" (p. 82). A Shi'ite interpretation of this would mean that when viewed from the perspective of the soul of humanity (*anima humana*), the Jungian notion of God-*image* is not other than the ego. The ego thinks it is the soul of the world (*anima mundi*). In other words, the human ego-consciousness is epistemologically divorced from the totality of being, where [his] Adam (humanity) falls into trouble having an inflated sense of being. This is the starting point of the soul's suffering in Islam and a preparatory stage of the soul's journey to gain nearness to God. In gnostic language, we read:

> The Soul once turned toward matter, she became enamored of it, and burning with the desire to experience the pleasures of the body, she no longer wanted to disengage herself from it. Thus the world was born. From that moment the Soul forgot herself. She forgot her original habitation, her true center, her eternal being. (Jonas, 1958, p. 63)

The central point proposed through this context is, therefore, through the symbolism of suffering of the *Ahl al Bayt*, Shi'a participants activate their inner selves in the Ashura

[7] See Kingsley, 2018, pp. 645-647 (note 35) on Jungian inflatedness.

ritual. Via *mimesis* or imitation, imagination, and their religious powers of recognition, they salvage their souls by meeting with the divine intellect within.

For me psychologically, this ritual process, occurring in stages, produces different conscious states that lead toward what Jung called individuation or becoming whole. I see in the acts of the ritual ceremonies, different psychic modes of experience, of knowing and being, as a person in therapy goes through analysis toward gradual self-healing. Both ritual and analytical psychology, in this sense, are concerned with the psychological development of an individual, whether unconsciously or consciously.

I see ritual stages as psychic phases or dramatic acts in a play. They are like alchemy stages (the *nigredo,* the *albedo,* the *rubedo*), which Jung saw as corresponding to the psyche's goal depicted in a step-by-step return of the ego toward union with the Self.

Through this investigation, I link, compare, and contrast the Ashura phases and discuss the psychological states interpreted by Jung as well as by classical Jungians such as Edinger and von Franz—as these stages relate to the transformative processes of the psyche.

I think the ritual's goal is not ego assimilation; it is to encounter and connect with the Imam-*image*. And I will describe the difference as the study proceeds.

Significance of the Research

This research is important for two reasons. First, through alchemical hermeneutics, depth psychology can draw out the often unspoken or hidden psychological meanings of religious symbols, thus making Ashura tasks less unconscious and compulsory. Second, through spiritual hermeneutics, depth psychology can be

enriched by recognizing Shi'ite philosophy, especially its epistemological stages within the soul's journey of transforming, becoming, being, or how the process of individuation is practiced from the Shi'ite imagination.

A Brief Background of Shi'ism

Shi'ism is one of the two major branches of Islam, making up about 15% of Muslims. According to Murata and Chittick (1994), Shi'ites "are distinguished from Sunnis both by the jurisprudence they follow and by certain objects of faith, in particular the Imamate, or belief that certain descendants of the Prophet called imams play an intermediary role between human beings and God" (p. 344).

Many Shi'ite subsects exist; the two major ones are Twelvers and the Ismailis. As the largest sect, Twelvers are the most influential among the Shi'ite populace, living mainly in modern Iran, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Egypt, and some parts of North Africa, such as Nigeria. Unlike other Shi'as, Twelvers believe in the 12 infallibles, otherwise known as the divinely ordained Imams, the last Imam being Muhammad al-Mahdi (a.s). This 12th Imam is presently in occultation—meaning hidden from view—but he will return (*raj'a*, or *parousia* in Greek) as the promised eschatological redeemer or messiah. Along with *Īsa ibn Maryam*, Jesus (a.s) son of Mary, al-Mahdi will establish divine justice and peace on Earth (Nasr, 2000). Twelvers connect the reality of the al-Mahdi with the notion of Christ and time.

As a religious sect, Shi'ism began with the death of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad ibn Abdullah in 632 CE. He was from the Banu Hashim clan. This clan belonged to the tribe of Quraysh in Arabia (Hitti, 2002). He was born in Mecca, where

the most revered and sacred shrine, the Kaabah, is situated. The latter serves the Muslim community as the *qibla* (direction of prayer). Kaabah is considered the center of this world. Muhammad died in Yathrib (present-day Medina). Shi'as regard him as the last of the prophets, commonly referred to as the Seal of all the prophets, who confirmed the prophets who came before him, including Moses (a.s) and Jesus (a.s). He was 40 years old when the Biblical Holy Ghost, Gabriel (*Jibrā'il*, a.s), revealed the first verses of the Qur'an to him.

One holy night (*leylat al-qadr*) in a cave on Mount Hira where Muhammad periodically secluded himself from the daily life of Mecca, he heard the voice of Gabriel commanding him to "recite." The Prophet continued to hear these commands throughout his life. These recitations are the ephemeral verses (*ayah,* or signs) of the celestial Qur'an that came to be actualized in his heart. The reality of the Qur'an can therefore be understood as hidden (*bātin*) and revealed (*zāhir*). On this point, a parting of ways in Islam—namely, Shi'ism versus Sunnism, occurred. Shi'a Muslims place a greater emphasis on interpreting the hidden aspects of the Qur'anic signs via psychic faculties.

Early Muslims recognized that the holy words of God, the Qur'an, could only have been given to, and received by, a Perfect Man, *insān kāmil*. He corresponds to the Gnostic Anthropos or the Primordial Man. He is the archetype of Adam (*adamiyah*), whom Jung (1937/1968e) referenced this way: "A name [given A.D.A.M] in the language of the angels; but with reference to his body, they named him symbolically after the four elements of the whole heavenly sphere" (p. 363).

The descent of the divine spark or spirit in Adam's body is described in the Qur'an as follows: when God wanted to create Adam (a.s), He commanded His angels to

bring earth from the four corners of the corporeal world. Then, God blew into Adam His own Spirit (Q. 15:29) and taught him knowledge of His Names. Thus, Adam was the first prophet (*nabi*). Shi'as believe that God in the Preserved Tablet (*loh mahfooz*) wrote Adam's heavenly and earthly journey (Q. 56:78) as fate and continued through his generations, prophet to prophet, until Muhammad. In this sense, Adam is Muhammad, in spirit, because he carried the archetype of prophecy or *nabuwwah.*

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was also *rasūl ullah* (divine messenger). Muslims believe that in the past, the divine intention, or God's words in the form of messages, descended from the One, Allah, to all the 124,000 prophets (although only 25 are mentioned in the Qur'an); however, 313 messengers are responsible for setting up religious law (*sharia*): "They establish religions," wrote Murata and Chittick (1994), "whereas prophets who are not messengers modify or reform already established religions" (p. 343). The Words (*Kalām*) of God are revealed to the messengers in textual form. The Qur'an is *Al Kitāb* or *The Book* revealed to the Prophet. And all the prophets give witness to its archetypal or Heavenly Wisdom and Authority.

The Qur'anic text is in Arabic because it arrived through an Arab man. But it is believed by all Muslims that Arabic is a sacred language chosen by God. It is a liturgical and a syllabic language that reads right to left. Syllabic languages can have multiple meanings that can be made by adding different vowels. Through the language of the Qur'an, Shi'as believe in the prophetic science that goes back to the Persians and Greeks via the Semitic prophets. This is why Iranian prophetology was integrated in the Safavid scholasticism in Shi'ite thought.

According to Shi'ite belief, aside from the dual nature of the Qur'an, *zāhir* (revealed to mankind) and *bātin* (hidden or preserved with God), the Prophet's reality (*Haqīqat al Mohammadiyah*) is also of two kinds. Shi'ite theosophers such as Suhrawardi (d. 1191 CE), according to Corbin (2006) refer to this two-ray reality as the outer (*nubuwah zahiriyah*) and the inner (*nubuwah batiniyah*) prophecy. Shi'as believe that the outer is the cause and *telos* of the macrocosmic universe, and the inner is equivalently the ordering principle within mankind, the light spark within the microcosm. But these two aspects are of one Muhammadan reality, which is comparable to the Intellect of the peripatetic (and Neoplatonic) philosophers. It can be understood as the entire outward creation, on the one hand, which mankind is a physical part. And on the other hand, the Muhammadan reality is hidden in the human soul.

When the soul reflects on the Intellect going inward, it sees four levels that correspond psychologically to the physical elements and human senses. In Islam, the soul is in between the body and the spirit, that is to say, it is the body of the spirit, and the spirit of the body. Corbin (2006) gives us the schema of the Shi'ite understanding of the dynamism of the soul. There are the basic four levels of reality that soul finds itself in. These four levels make between them a threefold hierarchy of realms or epiphanic spaces in the soul: 1) the world of the intelligences or spirits, 2) the world of the imagination, and 3) the corporeal world (see Fig. 3). The spirits manifest in their active combinations and degrees of categories, which makes the human soul (*nafs*) experience its [on the path to its] own realized state of being.

Depth psychologically, today we can equate these worlds as 1) spirit, 2) mind, and 3) body, where the second category of the mind is considered to be the organ of conscious

experience. It is the entire realm of the 'psychic' process. The "psychic," says Jung (1955-56/70a), "is a phenomenal world in itself, which can be reduced neither to the brain nor to metaphysics" (p.468). This means that for Jung the 'psychic' is a process which cannot be explained by materialism and also it cannot be described by philosophical speculations. On the other hand, Corbin (2014) writes that Jung separated human inheritances [archetypes], which are the central concept of Jung's thought, as the *a priori* categorical dominants of the psyche, that is, prior to the conditions of family or race.

> These inheritances are general arrangements with the mind, or more exactly Forms according to which the mind gives order to its contents and which we can designate as categories analogous to the logical categories of understanding, but with the difference that they are categories of the imagination. (pp. 59-60)

This means that what the psyche is for Jung, for Corbin, it is the realm of imagination—when viewed from the perspective of Shi'ite cosmology. In depth psychological logic, the psyche gains a limited or relative understanding of the spiritual or metapsychological contents of the unconscious through imagination, which announces the unconscious autonomous contents symbolically—contents which are the somewhat inherited intelligences in their own right that Jung called archetypes or ordering principles of the psyche. They are perceived as images by the psyche, and in the body as instincts. This is because they take on a substantial yet subtle body in the former: as in dreams, fantasies, auditory voices, and visions. And in the latter, they emerge as hunger, survival, and sexual drives.

Based on these threefold categories of a personality in the individual (spirit, mind, body), Shi'a Muslims not only believe the mind in this schema to be psycho-somatic, meaning outward manifestation of the body, but also, psycho-spiritual or inward relationship with the spiritual or metaphysical reality. Psychologically, Shi'a Muslims in the latter sense do not reduce or limit the inverse schema of the return of the ego-personality to the 'psychic' alone. They believe that the psyche, with its paradoxical powers, is able to cross its own boundaries into the mysteries of the material and spiritual realities.

In this context, this study discusses the concept of *walayah*—the Imamate—as an extension of Muhammadan consciousness (*nafs Muhammadiyah*), granted to all the Imams on earth. This consciousness distinguishes two levels of the psyche's visionary perception, namely subjective and objective. The former is understood from the epistemological perspective of the psyche as she receives knowledge from the Self (introversion). This is when the subject is facing the inner or gazing at the objective psyche. The latter is understood from the ontological view of the psyche's energy toward the outer world (extroversion). In both cases, whether looking within or without, the Self is seen in many forms—as different archetypal patterns structure the inner and outer experiences. Pre-Islamic pagans misunderstood this double aspect of the psyche, and after the Prophet's death, this lack of understanding divided the Muslim community. Unfortunately, a civil war ensued.

Shi'as believe Muhammad to be the beloved of God, and that both witnessed the creation of the cosmos together. They further attest that God created the cosmos for Muhammad and because of God's love for him. Like the Logos of Christianity or the

inner Christ in man, the inner Muhammad (from the root word *Ahmad,* which means praiseworthy) for Shi'as is the reason or purpose (*wajh*, *sabab*) for creating. This purpose fulfills the Lover. It is the underlying Mercy (*rahmāniyah*) for every created thing (*sheh*); hence, the cosmos is Mercy, or the highest form of love (*hibb ilāhi*) (Corbin, 1958/1969). This Mercy is the transmuted perfume or Breath (*Spiritus*, *Nafas*) of God for His beloved. *Al-Rahman* (The All-Merciful) is the second name of God in the Qur'an and Ibn al 'Arabi (d. 1240 CE), the great master in Sufism, puts the entire creation in the "Breath of the All-Merciful" (Chittick, 1989; Corbin, 1958/1969). This concept of the Breath in Jung's thought, so it seems to me, would be in so many words, a psychological projection. For Jungians, God projected the knowledge of His entire cosmos into existence. This notion can be found in almost all the texts related to the topic of projective identification (see von Franz, 1980, p. 118; Samuels, Shorter, & Plaut, 1986, pp. 105-106). For Jung, the object or that which carries the projection itself mirrors the image where the subject, God or the patient, transfers the Self-potential, the unconscious possibilities onto a concrete actuality. In the Qur'anic sense, the world is created out of a projected word "Be". The difference is that God wills it out of Him in Islam. The creation is an attribute of God's power that moves things from His imagination to an archetypal manifestation. From the human perspective, it is unconscious. As von Franz (1980) says that

> we know quite well that we never make the projection, but that it is done to us. I do not myself project something . . . The fact is that I suddenly find myself in the situation of projecting, and when I have seen that it was a projection, I can begin to talk about it, but not before. (p. 118)

Similarly, we find our own entire existence this way. We simply find ourselves "thrown" in an existential situation. This situation for a Shi'a adept is made out of the love, beauty, and mercy of God to His creatures. It is a *cosmic* theophany, and not an accident. In Shi'a gnosis, the cosmos is not a *res extensa* without a *telos*, as Descartes thought, or without hierarchy of beings, as in Copernican universe (see Jonas, 1958, pp. 320-340).

In the Shi'ite cosmology, a few chosen *persons* were endowed with guarding this perfume or Breath of God after Muhammad because they were closer to His essence, His *dhāt*. These are the Prophet's key family members (*ahl*) through Fatimah: The Imams, descendants of Ali, God's *awlīyā* or Friends of God. For Shi'a Muslims, the Prophet loved Ali, Fatimah, Hassan, and Hussain the most; Fatimah, therefore, plays a crucial role in the Shi'ite rituals.

Imam Hussain himself claimed the title of *wali ullah* (Friend of God) in a letter that showed Shi'ite philosophy to the Kufan (Iraqi) people (Ayoub, 1978). Moreover, by the eighth century, Shi'ite doctrine allowed some artists to develop symbolic images depicting the family of the Prophet sitting next to him (the Prophet) in Heaven when Adam was being created by God (Flaskerud, 2010; Corbin, 2006). In this realm of imagination with the help of Qur'anic exegesis of verses that support their metaphysical stations (*maqām*), Shi'as' unwavering love for the *Ahl al Bayt*—the family of the Prophet—can be seen as a numinous phenomenon in the Ashura ritual even today. Shi'as further believe that two things will lead believers to the gates of Paradise: the Qur'an and *Ahl al Bayt,* who are said to be the carriers of the former's inner meanings.

After the Prophet's death, a great struggle occurred in the Muslim community (*ummah*) regarding the succession of his office (Al-Tabarī, 1990a, 1990b, 1993). Those

who followed Ali and the *Ahl al Bayt* were the Shi'as, separating themselves from those who remained loyal to the political caliphs. The early Arab converts—those who traced their heritage purely to Arabic tribes—supported the party of Abu Bakr, the first caliph. They did not support Ali who eventually became the fourth caliph. These converts had an orthodox view and considered themselves the authority of the new faith, claiming the successorship belonged rightly to the tribe of Quraysh. They drew up the succession plan politically by the old tribal electoral system and claimed the Quraysh to be the only people who could rule over the rest of Arabia. Like any political election, a power struggle ensued.

The early supporters of Ali were a mixture of Arabs and Persians. They carried a new perspective of Islam very different from that of the purely Arabian elites of the seventh century. The Shi'as, therefore, understood the Prophet's teachings symbolically and philosophically, essentially from a qualitative perspective. They maintained that the caliphate should be based on the qualifications of a person who has seen the divine light *and* who also has a blood relation to the Prophet. Consequently, the Shi'as sided with the *Ansārs*, the people from Medina who helped and supported the Prophet when He was being persecuted by the Meccan elite thinkers; they were the immigrants (*mahajirūn*) in Medina.

In contrast to the aristocratic elites who were operating from within tribal thinking, the early Shi'as understood the succession of the Prophet from another perspective, from the Prophet's visionary knowledge itself. They asserted that the purpose of the Prophet's night journey (*mirāj*), for example, was for God to inform Him of Ali's successorship back on earth (Ayoub, 1978). Knowing his companion's jealous

attitude toward Ali, the Prophet suppressed this divine command. As a result, a revelation descended:

> O Apostle, convey that which was sent down to you from your Lord; for if you do not, you will not have conveyed his message. God will protect you from the people; surely God guides not the rejecters of faith. (Q. 5:67)

Shi'as recount that the Prophet then declared Ali as His successor on the way back from *hajj* (pilgrimage) near a well called *Ghadir Khumm* "when the Prophet is supposed to have declared the by now famous axioms, 'Of whomsoever I am his Master (*maula*) Ali is his Master', and 'I am the city of Knowledge and Ali is its Gate'" (Flaskerud, 2010, p. 203).

From that moment, as is said repeatedly in the ritual sermons, seditious behavior increased, and some even plotted to kill Ali, and few supporters were thrilled to hear the news of Ali's successorship. The term "Shi'a" was therefore strictly for the party, group, associates, partisans, or supporters of Ali from among the very close companions of the Prophet such as the ardent supporter Salmān al-Fārsī of Persia (d. 653 CE) whom the Prophet included him as "one of us" (*anta minna ahl al bayt*).[8] Other figures include Miqdad ibn Aswād al-Kindi of Yemen (d. 654 CE), Ammar ibn Yasir of Arabia (d. 657 CE), and Abu Dharr al-Ghifari of Arabia (d. 652 CE) (Al-Tabarī, 1990a, 1990b, 1993). These important individuals, among others, were the first Shi'a Muslims during the life of the Prophet because they learned the deeper meanings of the Qur'an directly from him and Ali, according to the Shi'ite view. After the Prophet's death, they disagreed politically with the Meccans about the succession of the Prophet. By not pledging

allegiance to the first three caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman), they made Ali a corollary of the existing idea prevalent among the community (Jafri, 1979). This means that Ali was already envisioned by them as the successor to the prophetic line.

The pre-Islamic Arabs were superstitious people believing in magic, djinns, and desert spirits (Hitti, 2002). They were pagan, and with much struggle, they embraced the message of the Qur'an, especially the verses concerning the resurrection of the body after death (Schimmel, 1985). The struggle to accept resurrection is important to the present study because it is concerned with the Shi'ite doctrine of Imamate, which is Muhammad's soul continuing in all the Twelve Imams after him.

This idea of the reappearance of a prophet or transmigration of prophecy in history was as confusing to the early Arabs as it would be today. It stirred considerable controversy. In fact, they turned to hostility, perhaps because, and this is purely my guess, that they did not know of Greek philosophy or Christian doctrines of resurrection. This "undeveloped" mind in Arabia during the rise of Islam is the so-called *dor-e-jahiliyyah* (age of ignorance). The new ideas of Islam were a problem for the old tribal mentality. In the early Arab community, Esposito (1999) noted "an oft-repeated dyad pits preconversionary disbelief against divinely revealed faith" (p. 424). This wordy notion suggests, at least to me, that the Umayya clan wanted to restore their old aristocratic power as soon as opportunity gave way after the Prophet's death.

In terms of depth psychology, this ignorance of the inner history, and a lack of a symbolic understanding of the Prophet, led the early Arabs to jealousy. To interpret and apply Jungian terms, this lack was due to emotive-laden complexes, a division between

[8] Salmān al-Fārsī is an interesting figure in the history of Shi'ite politics and spirituality. He symbolizes the

outer forms of traditions and inner experience—the spirit of the times without a connection to the spirit of the depths—an unconscious eclipse that caused the Shi'ite/Sunni split that led to the Karbala massacre. This was, according to Esposito (1999), a conflict between *adat* and *hukum* that started with the Prophet's claim to prophethood (*nabuwwah*). The term *hukum* refers to the law or divine command in the Qur'an, and adat is "to all that stands outside juridical Islam" (p. 425). This dyad was the clash between *belief* in religion, in the strict literal or exoteric sense, and one's own self-experiential knowing, the esoteric expression of the divine within (*scientia sacra*).

Shi'ite gnosis seems to be vigilant against one-sidedness, although it is simply a science base on a twofold nature of facts, seen and unseen. It accepts knowing (epistemology, *ma'arifa*) *and* believing (ontology, *iman*). The Shi'ite point of departure, in theory at least, takes both the exoteric and the esoteric reality of the Qur'anic text and prophecy into account. Practically, Shi'ite devotion to the Prophet, the *Ahl al Bayt*, and the divine commands of the Qur'an are not distinct from the divine commands from within, that is to say, they are not contradictory to them. The reason is that in Shi'ite understanding, both the Qu'ranic revelations and the Prophet's family were born from the heart and soul of the Prophet's *Haqīqat al Mohammadiyah*.

Shi'ism interprets the phenomenon of resurrection and reincarnation symbolically. Imam Hussain, for instance, conquered death beyond history, although not literally. He is a martyred soul living symbolically in the hearts of the Shi'ite people. The Ashura ritual revives *Hussainiyāt*. The suffix *iyāt* denotes a state or condition of a noun. In English, it has the meaning of "ness". Psychologically, Hussain-ness is a state of consciousness—a

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archetype of the 'orphan' (*yathīm*) and the 'exile'. See Corbin, 2006, pp. 60, 75, 102, 132.

spirit representing his ethical values, moral cause, piety, and purpose. The participants of the ritual resuscitate *Hussainiyāt*, which is none other than his Father's vocation. Ali is considered not only the first Muslim philosopher and refiner of the Prophet's message for humanity, but also a perfect human being. *Hussainiyāt*, therefore, symbolizes an Imam's consciousness (*imami* or *imamah*). It is a sacrificial consciousness fully submitted to the will of God. In the human world, it is without any self-interest or animus.

God's grace (*barakah*) for the *Ahl al Bayt*, according to Shi'ism, aroused hostility in those one-sided literalists who killed the Prophet's family. Early Islamic history is dark because of this envious nature of a tribal mentality. It records bloody civil wars (*fitnah*), grim trials, and tribulations between the clans of Arabia. This murderous behavior toward the *Ahl al Bayt* was based on a lust for worldly power. Shi'as call this dark materialist attitude *Yazidiāt* (dubbed after the caliph Yazid I).

The Story of Karbala

Led by general Ubayd ibn Ziyad (d. 686 CE), the army of the Umayyad caliph, Yazid I (d. 683 CE), reportedly numbered in the thousands (Al-Tabarī, 1990b). While traveling through Karbala to Kufah, a city south of Baghdad, Hussain, his close friends, followers, and family, including women and children, were strategically surrounded by Ziyad's army. Umayyad's army's goal was to prevent Hussain from reaching Kufah because the caliph Yazid, son of Mu'āwiya, had learned that Hussain, backed by the Kufans, was going to revolt against him. This question of the succession of the Prophet after Ali's assassination further divided Islam.

Ibn Ziyad and his army forced Hussain to camp on the plains of Karbala with no access to the water supplied by the Euphrates River (Al-Tabarī, 1990b). Hussain was

given the ultimatum to surrender unconditionally and pledge allegiance to Yazid, the self-appointed Umayyad caliph who took power after his father Mu'āwiya (d. 680 CE), governor of the Levant. Hussain did not accept Yazid's proposal because of the Hassan-Mu'āwiya peace treaty, which determined the use of elections for the succession to the caliphate by the Islamic community after Mu'āwiya. After 3 days of no access to water, Hussain decided on the need to battle Yazid's army on the 10th day of Muharram. It was a massacre of cosmic proportions, according to the Shi'ite world view (Al-Tabarī, 1990b).

Historical accounts (Al-Majlisi, 2014; Al-Tabarī, 1990b) confirmed that all male companions of Hussain, save his son and the fourth Shi'ite Imam Zayn al-Abideen (a.s), sacrificed themselves on the arid battlefield by fighting one by one for their belief in the Holy Qur'an and not swearing allegiance to Yazid. Even Hussain's 6-month-old son Ali al-Asghar (a.s) was struck in the neck by a three-headed arrow when Hussain carried him in front of ibn Ziyad's battalion, pleading for some water. Hussain was the last man to be killed. He was beheaded by Shimr ibn Thil-Jawshan. Shimr is depicted in the passion plays as the chief antagonist.

The aftermath of the battle, according to Shi'ite's accounts, was unpleasant to mention. Basically, at sundown on the Day of Ashura, the surviving women and female children of the Prophet's family were tormented and mistreated in the camps after Hussain was decapitated on the battlefield. They then were brought to Damascus, where the conquerors paraded them in chains as captives. It was reported that the starved and abused children died in dungeons, including Hussain's 4-year-old daughter.

In the ritual, a 'state of mind' or 'mood' (*hāl*) is evoked by hosts of liturgical expressions that epitomize the tragic scenes in the form of prayer and supplication.

From Karbala to Ashura

The mourning rites of the Ashura ritual, though described by some scholars as redemptive for Shi'as and by others as cathartic, are theorized in this study to be an imaginal re-actualization of the events of Karbala. The Shi'a participants seem to encounter a numinous experience via the remembrance of the trial of Imam Hussain and his followers on the plains of Karbala.

In Shi'ism, Hussain is considered a perfect human being, a sign of God, or a proof of God. Similar to the Christians who find companionship in Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, Shi'as, too, by commemorating this event, religiously believe that they are with Hussain's mother, Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter, who cries for her son in Heaven every year. Thus, Fatimah is a very important person who somewhat corresponds to the anima archetype, in the Jungian sense, within the Shi'ite psyche because she is the one who leads Shi'a devotees closer to the "God-*image*". This idea is discussed further in Part 2 of this study, where alchemical stages of the Ashura ritual are explored through the rite of passage and its dramatic form of passion.

This passionate rite, according to Korom (2003), "never lost its religious implications, and as a dramatic form, it has its origins in the Muharram processions commemorating Hussain's martyrdom" (p. 33). These dramatic acts in the processions are part of the Ashura ritual. Further, Hussain's sister, Zaynab bint Ali (a.s), who was a witness to the massacre, assembled the first written account of the early form of the Ashura ritual shortly after Hussain's death (Al-Majlisi, 2014). Historical and

ethnographical works revealed that Hussain's grave became a pilgrimage site for Shi'a Muslims within a few years after his death. A tradition quickly developed of pilgrimages to the shrine, known as "*Ziarat Ashura*" or *Kamil al-Ziyarat* (complete pilgrimage) (p. 128). The brother-sister relationship of Hussain and Zaynab is epitomized in the ritual.

To those who weep at the shrine, *Hussain is in their tears* [italics added], and they will "return free of sin" (Al-Majlisi, 2014, pp. 128–129). These early pilgrims started the rites of remembrance of Imam Hussain's martyrdom that continued to develop into later periods, even though the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs banned it in the 8th to 10th centuries (Chelkowski, 1985). Public commemoration of Ashura in Baghdad grew despite the ban. Encouraged by the Fatimid dynasty (973–1171 CE), the ritual became an official Islamic religious practice. I cannot help but notice that once the ritual was supported by political authorities and not suppressed, it penetrated consciously on a collective level where the archetypal activations further broadened and transformed the ritual's imaginal and spiritual presence freely in the *feeling* of communal unity. Evidence for and against this belief is offered in the Safavid period scholarship. Fine research studies by Korom (2003), Aghaie (2004, 2005), and Flaskerud (2010) have confirmed that Ashura rites changed in their expression, suggesting that Shi'a Muslims transformed and refined their beliefs becoming distinguished in their doctrinal approach, often called "The Karbala Paradigm," in contradistinction to the Sunni orthodoxy. For example, Flaskerud (2010) writes:

> Elaborate rituals have been drawn up for the performance of visitations, including, the reading of pilgrims' prayer, *ziyarat-nameh*. *Ziyarat ashura* is part of the liturgy developed for the *ziyarat* of Imam Husayn's shrine at

> Karbala. At the shrine, the prayer is performed as a salutation offered to Imam Husayn and the martyrs of Karbala. To many Shi'as, a pilgrimage to the shrine at Karbala is as meritorious as the obligatory *hajj* to Mecca. Not every Shi'a does, however, have the opportunity to visit Karbala. Therefore, a pilgrimage to a shrine can be performed symbolically. The fifth Imam, Muhammad bin Ali al-Baqir, is reported to have told a certain al-Qamah ibn Muhammad how to perform a symbolic visit to Karbala. Among his recommendations were, on the day of Ashura, to recite *ziyarat ashura* while facing Karbala, and to hold a mourning session, *mātam*, inviting family and friends to attend. The attitude while performing the ritual is advised to be that of a total immersion in the tragedy, as though the ritual participant had witnessed the battle. Whoever recites *ziyarat ashura* is said to enjoy the status of the martyrs at Karbala, and to be rewarded similarly to those believers who actually go to Karbala to perform the pilgrimage. *Ziyarat ashura* is also used as a supplication, *du'a*. It is considered to be particularly beneficial and is therefore a commonly recited prayer, to be found in *Mafatih al-Jenan*. (p. 205)

We read in Aghaie (2005):

> Tenth of Moharram: Ashura—the day of Imam Hosayn's martyrdom, Pakistani Shi'is fast on this day, breaking the fast in the late afternoon after noontime prayers. The final activity is the Sham-e-Ghariban ritual, which commemorates the act of trying to find the corpses of the fallen martyrs. (p. 145)

Korom (2003) reminds us of the importance of the Ashura (*Hosey*) gathering to elicit an emotional response from the participants. He calls this "subjective apprehension." By this term, what he means is "a personal experience of Hussain's passion on the phenomenological level, a level on which individuals have direct access to the imam's mediating powers" (p. 37). This would be an inner psychological function that conjures up to consciousness "variegated" or archetypal images, as well as cultural images drawn from a long history of the ritual (Korom, 2003, p. 193).

This study follows how Shi'ite psychology adapted to the shifting sociocultural worldviews because to understand the archetypal dynamics of Ashura and its developed image today, according to Korom (2003), the stages of the ritual phenomenon must be viewed in the light of pre-Islamic and Islam expressions.

Acknowledging this, and by using Jung's depth psychological understanding of alchemical stages and methods of amplification, or *theoria*, and Corbin's study of Iranian philosophy, I attempt to find the archetypal dynamics that might be at work in the pre-Islamic thought *and* Islamic theosophy that culminated in the Ashura rite.

Definitions of Major Terms and Concepts

The following are key terms and concepts for this dissertation. They are used consistently according to these definitions throughout the document.

Archetypes. The theory of archetypes developed by Jung has many levels of meaning. According to Corbin (2014), "Jung borrowed this term directly from the *Corpus Hermeticum*" (p. 60). The archetype per se or the ontological essence of an archetype, according to Jung (1955–1956/1970a, p. 453), is inaccessible to human experience and is

differentiated from an archetypal image that can be directly experienced. I discuss the concept of archetypes from both Jungian and Shi'ite perspectives, for these concepts play a vital role simply because symbols *re-present* archetypes. These representations point to multivalent expressions (positive and negative) of a nature that has an autonomous will in relation to the conscious part of the psyche and are of a numinous quality, provoking embodied emotion or feeling-toned groups of representations, which Jung called *complexes*.

In this document, the term *archetype*(s) is used mainly from the tradition of Platonic ideas or forms, which are in the realm of the divine within and without, and yet when activated in the human being, as Jung saw it, serve to bring a transformation of the personality. For this study, it is essential to understand archetypes are not identical to symbols; however, archetypes mainly use symbols to express their will within psychic experience.

For instance, emotions can be seen as symbolic. Emotions expressed by an individual have a character of autonomy and a possessive quality to the ego-personality. Jung (1955–1956/1970a) explained:

> The concept of the archetypes . . . is derived from the repeated observation that for instance, the myths and fairy tales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere. We meet these same motifs in the fantasies, dreams, deliria, and delusion of individuals living today. These type images and associations are what I call archetypal ideas. The more vivid they are, the more they will be colored by particularly strong feeling-tones. (p. 449)

For the present purpose in understanding archetypes, colors in alchemy stages are directly related with feeling-tones of what I call "the Ashura complexes."

Complex. According to Samuels, Shorter, and Plaut (1986), "a complex is a collection of images and ideas, clustered round a core derived from one or more archetypes, and characterized by a common emotional tone" (p. 34). Using the experimental method of word association testing, Jung was able to show that the quality of his patient's reactions to a "stimulus word" accorded with an archetypal association. Jung concluded that the answers given by the patients to a stimulus word were not accidental; they were filtered through their own complexes. According to Jacobi (1959), Jung "first applied the term 'feeling-toned complex' to the phenomenon of the 'feeling-toned groups of representations' in the unconscious; later the term was shortened to 'complex'" (p. 6).

These complexes, for Jung, *disturb* or transform psychic processes. They are intrapsychic with an archetypal core because "it was shown by carefully conducted experiments," noted Jacobi (1959), "that the 'disturbances' in question . . . originate in a realm which is beyond the objective control of the conscious mind and which manifests itself only when the threshold of attention is lowered" (p. 7). This means that complexes have an inward-to-outward quality corresponding to the full potential of the emotional charge they carry within their archetypal nucleus, and as they depotentiate, they actualize using psychic economy. Once activated and actualized, complexes resist consciousness, "shatter its unity, split off from it, and act as an 'animated foreign body in the sphere of consciousness'" (p. 9).

Complexes, as unconscious contents, behave as split personalities in the psyche lurking in the background, and once constellated by an event or experience, complexes can cause compulsive behavior (Jacobi, 1959). As a result, Jung investigated complexes along with dream images that provided him a way into understanding the unconscious.

Complexes for Jung (1948/1969e) are often "splinter psyches" in the unconscious (pp. 96–99). With no inhibiting consciousness, they have an autonomous personality that can appear in personified form. Human ancestors, who could not "psychologize" the nature of complexes, suggested Jung, imagined them as spirits, demons, or djinns. In their personified forms, therefore, complex expressions may be interpreted as the direct projections of the unconscious psyche (Jacobi, 1959). In other words, personification is an activity of the unconscious, not an achievement of the ego. It is not something we consciously choose to do, which makes interpretation of the expression of complexes possible. These projections are not only intrapsychic within an individual, but they also interpsychically transfer the unconscious contents of one person to another, which is called *transference*.

However, writes Cheetham (2012), "any purported causative, numinous 'object' of religious experience is never given *in itself* but only ever 'filtered through the medium of human consciousness,' we never have the 'thing-in-itself,' the *noumenal*, but only ever the phenomenon in consciousness, the *phenomenal*" (p. 144).

As multiple personalities, complexes maintain spaces or fields in the psyche responsible for human experiences which move psychic content from the archetypal level to the personal level (see Figure 1). In between these two levels, however, other levels of psychological experiences—such as a cultural level—may appear. Joseph Henderson's

(1984) seminal contribution extended Jung's theory of complex to the cultural level of the psyche. Singer and Kimbles (2004) explained this idea connecting culture with archetypes:

> Like individual complexes, cultural complexes are repetitive, autonomous, resist consciousness, and collect experience that confirms their historical point of view. Cultural complexes also are bipolar, so that when they are activated the group ego becomes identified with one part of the unconscious complex, while the other part is projected out onto the suitable hook of another group. (p. 21)

Depth psychology. According to Jung (1954/1976), "'Depth Psychology' is a term deriving from medical psychology, coined by Eugen Bleuler to denote that branch of psychological science which is concerned with the phenomenon of the unconscious" (p. 477). "As a philosophical and metaphysical concept," Jung further contended, the "unconscious occurs fairly early, for instance, as 'petites perceptions' in Leibniz, 'eternal unconscious' in Schelling, 'unconscious Will' in Schopenhauer, and as the 'divine Absolute' in von Hartmann" (p. 477).

In this dissertation, generally, I am using the term *depth psychology* to mean the psychological theories and practices that explore the unconscious material in relation to, or as that which underlies the existence of, the conscious aspects of the psyche such as ego-consciousness. Unlike Freud's storehouse of repressed contents, however, the unconscious for Jung (1954/1969c) is more, and like an ocean, it "may possibly have everything that consciousness has, including perception, apperception, memory, imagination, will, affectivity, feeling, reflection, judgment, etc., all in subliminal form"

(pp. 171–172). Hence, in the Hermetic sense of "as above so below," the unconscious seems to be, specifically for Jung, an objective psyche, a second psychological system in a compensatory dynamic with the subjective ego-consciousness.

Jung postulated a structure of the unconscious psyche in three layers: the personal which is closest to consciousness, the collective unconscious that is shared by all human species and is a deeper layer—more powerful than the personal unconscious—containing archetypal contents, and the psychoidal unconscious or the psychoid dimension (or pleroma), which is the deepest layer without duality. The collective unconscious and the psychoid element are "unconscious" only in comparison with ego-consciousness—that is, they never contact the ego-consciousness directly, only through the medium of images or symbols that express the ruling principles of the psyche, namely, archetypes.

This study explores Ashura symbols mainly from the perspective of the collective unconscious, for it is this layer that connects the personal unconscious to the absolute psychoidal by way of archetypes. In Jungian psychology, the collective unconscious is an oceanic middle layer within the unconscious realm where the archetypal contents live according to specific libidinal (energic/vital) laws and their autonomous behavior. They are in the religious sense, angels and demons, or in the mythic sense, gods and goddesses. These are the contents behind the Ashura ritual studied here. Shi'a Muslims understand them as subtle "persons" responsible for producing chaos and suffering, ordering and creating meaning, and thus effecting their spiritual development (see Figure 1).

Individuation. Jung applied the term *individuation* to a principle and a process that he understood as underlying all psychic activity (Hopcke, 1999). This is the key developmental concept postulated by Jung to show a person's journey of self-

actualization or a process of knowing the deeper wholeness of the (in-divisible) Self, which is the totality of the unconscious and consciousness. The individuation process is a working relationship between the unconscious and ego-consciousness, that is to say, between the individual ego complex and the archetype of the Self, as Jung conceived it. For Jung, this process of the psyche is the search for meaning and wholeness. Jung indicated that "individuation is an expression of that biological process . . . by which every living thing becomes what it was *destined* [italics added] to become from the beginning" (Jung, 1952/1969b, p. 307). Though for Jung the process of individuation takes place in the phenomenal world, he inserted the destiny of biology to suggest an inherent teleology, which in a sense is an absolute law for Jung—free-will is subordinate to the absolute law of the process. Teleology comes from the root word *telos*, meaning purpose or the ultimate aim. This is central to Islamic gnosis, or *īrfan*, explored in this work because it is deeply rooted, similar to alchemy, in Shi'ite practice of knowing oneself and God.

The individuation process described by Jung is a natural psychic phenomenon of healing where the unconscious is integrated by the ego, the "I" principle, or with the conscious aspect of the psyche. To become more conscious of the Self, a person must be able to hold the tension of opposites. To bear conflict, the ego, therefore, needs to be alchemically transformed. We can equate this process to the hero's journey where due to the experiences of outer and inner conflicts, something new grows—a third, which for Jung is a symbol. A symbol in a Shi'ite sense stands between the opposites and possesses a transformative numinous element for personality development, healing, and becoming a perfect human being.

Although the concept of becoming whole (*al-insān kāmil* in Shi'ism) is not limited to organic life, for Jung and Shi'ism (see *Qutb* or Imam.), it is a teleological concept that applies to every thing in the universe. That is to say, the act in the present is bound by the *telos* which forms the event. I am therefore using the term "individuation" to signify a constructive/synthetic conscious realization of the goal, which is the cause and has a transformative impact on the Ashura participants furthering their psychological development as regulated homeostatically by the Self-archetype in the ritual stages.

Karbala. A sacred place for Shi'a Muslims, Karbala is a city in central Iraq, located southwest of Baghdad, where a battle took place on Muharram 10, in the year 61 AH (October 10, 680 CE) between a small group of supporters and relatives of Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Hussain ibn Ali, and a larger military detachment from the forces of Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiya, the Umayyad caliph. Geographically, for Shi'as, Karbala occupies the central symbolic place of martyrdom on earth among all historical places of battle and human sacrifice. Not even the battle of Uhud (3 AH/625 CE) that took place in Yathrib (present-day Medina) where over 70 Muslims were martyred replaced the significance of the tragedy that took place in Karbala. The earth of Karbala is considered by Shi'as to be sacred ground, mixed with imam Hussain's blood: "Karbala is to Shi'ite Islam what Calvary is to Christianity" (Chelkowski, 1985, p. 19).

Muharram. A sacred time for Shi'a Muslims, Muharram is the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar when Shi'a Muslims mourn the death of Imam Hussain and the Prophet's family (*Ahl al-Bayt*) by refraining from all joyous events and by performing ritualistic salutations, ceremonies, and remembrances. The Shi'a devoted participants also reenact the sufferings that took place at Karbala.

Shi'a. Although the term Shi'i or Shi'ite can be and is often used individually for a person practicing Shi'ism, it can also be used for technical connotations such as "Shi'ite law," "Shi'ite creed," "Shi'ite piety," and so on. Consequently, I am using the term "Shi'a" exclusively in this dissertation to signify individual or collective human adherents to the faith. Shi'a is a *person* who is considered "the follower of Ali."

Stages of Alchemy. To understand psychological phases in the ritual acts, we are to see them first in light of the practical laboratory phases and procedures, that is, in states of matter: solid, liquid, and gas. We can see these states of matter in their own pure quality, or their many combinations relating to the element and the unique state of fire.

In the process of laboratory fire assaying, which is a classical metallurgical method of separating or refining gold from base metals, the work is to transform a solid matter (ores) into a molten state by smelting first. In order for this to happen successfully, a furnace or a torch has to put out heat above 2000 degrees Fahrenheit. This is because gold's melting point is 1948 degrees Fahrenheit. In this fiery fusing process, soda ash (sodium carbonate) is added. It anneals or adheres to impurities, resulting in unwanted material. This waste is separated after pouring the gold and then by cooling and hammering.

The "waste," due to its salt content, is usually saved for use of making glass and mirrors.[9]

An assayist at this point is left with a homogeneous nugget of raw metals: gold, silver, zinc, copper, tin, nickel, iron, and/or lead. The next procedure is in the furnace again called "parting" or "cupellation". This time the nugget is put in a cupel, a small

[9] see Edinger (1995, pp. 164-165) for salt as a symbol of the self.

porous pot made of bone ash. The properties of the latter absorb lead when heated intensely. This is why lead is added to the matter because it serves, mainly, a twofold purpose of separation: 1) it bonds to base metals turning them into oxides, while 2) it separates silver and gold. This separation happens inside a hot furnace where some lead oxide is absorbed by the cupels. But it is mainly released in dangerous fumes, carrying with it, impurities of the base metals.

In the past, mercury or quicksilver was used in this process because this metal bonds with gold to form an amalgam. Gold was then extracted by evaporating mercury. But chemists today hardly use mercury due to health and environmental concerns.

This leaves our matter isolated with gold and silver. However, there is usually a residue of base metals or "sticky" metals due to air oxidation. Salt is used to protect from this and also it helps to wash in the next procedure, which is to put the much smaller nugget in *aqua regia* (1-part Nitric acid and 3-part Hydrochloric acid). This method is named the "wet" method. It is basically to separate gold from silver in a solution. Silver reacts with chloride and precipitates, leaving only gold in the solution. After filtering out the silver, the liquid form is further heated and evaporated in a glass alembic flask. This heating process is slow and needs attention and care because in it the liquid gold is present. And if heated too much, too quickly, then gold particles may evaporate in the air. This is why a special neck-shaped flask is designed to keep gold-matter from escaping. It keeps the system in a boundary of heating, titration, or distillation.

In the last phases of the work, the liquid matter transforms to steam and humid-like gaseous form, which is then cooled back to liquid form. It is heated under a hotplate

and evaporated until a black gold powder emerges in the flask. In the end, the black color state then undergoes slow and controlled heat, which gives its true gold color and shine.

These outlined short procedures give us a hint of how the prime matter is put under the influence of heat, wet, cold, and dry conditions to forge change substantially. Now in these similar kinds of operations, the old alchemists in their laboratories were able to imagine, as Burkhardt (1967) puts it, the "*materia prima* of the entire cosmos in nature, capable of taking on all possible forms and states, without essential alteration" (p. 94). This means that the four qualities of heat, humidity, cold, and dryness can also be applied to mankind, especially onto his soul or psyche.

Jung (1942/1967c) described alchemical work like this:

> Since earliest times alchemy contained, or actually was, a secret doctrine. With the triumph of Christianity under Constantine the old pagan ideas did not vanish but lived on in the strange arcane terminology of philosophical alchemy. Its chief figure was Hermes or Mercurius, in his dual significance as quicksilver and the world soul, with his companion figures Sol (= gold) and Luna (= silver). The alchemical operation consisted essentially in separating the prima materia, the so-called chaos, into the active principle, the soul, and the passive principle, the body, which were then reunited in personified form in the *coniunctio* or "chymical marriage." In other words, the *coniunctio* was allegorized as the hierosgamos, the ritual cohabitation of Sol and Luna. From this union sprang the *filius sapientiae* or filius *philosophorum*, the transformed Mercurius, who was thought of as hermaphroditic in token of his rounded

> perfection. . . . The *opus alchymicum*, in spite of its chemical aspects, was always understood as a kind of rite after the manner of an *opus divinum*. (pp. 122–123)

Jung's statement needs unpacking, especially what is meant by passive and active in order to understand what is happening psychologically. This means that in doing the work, the alchemist's psychic body, which is the passive matter goes through three main stages of transmutation: from earth to water (the *nigredo* stage, or where this "muddy" consciousness receives the active principle of the water of the psyche), from water to air (mixed dissolved state of consciousness to a sublimated state), and from air to fire (from the *albedo* or sublimated state to the *rubedo* or light consciousness). This is the art and sacred science of ascending from the earthly matter to the heavenly realm [within the *balance* of the elements]. As the psychic energy moves towards the direction of the spiritual realm, she becomes the soul, represents the ego, and also frees herself from corporeal images. This higher consciousness understands the symbolic knowledge of the images.

After this stage is reached, that is, the high climes in the knowledge of the Self, she as the soul (*anima imago*) descends again to the passive earthly world, step by step again, after which she realizes that what was above is also below. Psychologically, this means that the transmutation of a perspective of the "I" takes place in the mind of the traveler. And the person becomes whole or individuated in the sense that the person holds the tension of the two worlds (passive and active) in a concrete union of the opposites, perceiving and feeling the creative perfection to the world soul, the *filius sapientiae*, or the philosopher's stone of the alchemist.

According to Haeffner (1991), “The main spiritual and mystical systems of the world have each worked out a concept of the graded path towards spiritual enlightenment” (p. 208). Mystical Islam, too, paralleling the Prophet’s ascent (*mir’aj*), has the idea called “the arc of ascent” and “the arc of descent,” which is the soul’s journey, a quest, her step-by-step pilgrimage to unite with God (*al haqq*) and return to earth (Chittick, 1989; see Figure 3). S. H. Nasr (as cited in Mahdihassan, 1979) commented:

> Alchemy is of course related to a science of the soul and is also inextricably bound in certain of its aspects to the early history of chemistry and metallurgy. But it cannot be reduced to either the study of materials pure and simple or of the psyche divorced from *pneuma*. (p. x)

But there is another perspective of looking at alchemy. It is a Jungian way or interpretation. In the introduction of Ibn Umail’s (2006) book *Kitāb Hall ar-Rumūz,* Marie-Louise von Franz explained:

> It is the unique merit of C. G. Jung to have shown that alchemy in its origins was not only the beginning of chemistry but was also a kind of religious yoga and that we also find in it the prehistory of modern depth psychology. The symbolic content of alchemy originated in fantasy processes which the alchemists experienced while they were staring at the chemicals cooking in their retort. Today we recognize in these fantasies projections which have only very little to do with what we know of chemistry, but which reappear in the dreams and visions of people who turn their attention to their own unconscious. (p. 15)

The reality of alchemy, as shown in these two comments, is flowing in two different riverbeds. I think the former statement by Nasr points to a remembrance of humans' enchanted existence with the world; it gives the idea of a rediscovery of traditional gnostic metaphysics in the sense that people must not forget the spirit (*pneuma*) in matter. This is a primordial or archaic idea that matter is a living being. It is not dead. This means that matter or outer objects have soul. The latter statement by von Franz provides a pure psychological definition where the alchemical knowledge flows toward depth psychology. This river is a perspective that reminds us that what is happening in the physical world, or what happens to matter, mirrors each individual's psychological happenings. It is not that matter has a soul of its own; it is just like a mirror that reflects the human soul. In other words, what we think in the metaphysical sense of *pneuma* in matter, is (nothing but?) projections of the unconscious psyche. Here, the depth psychological perspective sees the inner psychic facts as projections in matter.

Regardless of the differences, the flow of alchemical water (a perspectival view) seems to be running side by side, as I attempt to illustrate in this study of Ashura. I see both rivers and the *water* (which metaphorically means, to me, 'understanding' or movement of knowing in the arcane sense) point to one universal reality with different approaches. This is discussed further using Jung's concepts of transference and countertransference.

To put it in simple language, alchemy's stages of the *nigredo*, the *albedo*, and the *rubedo* can be seen in two ways: (a) transmutation of metals and (b) color symbolism pertaining to philosophical alchemy. In the first case, base metals are considered by alchemists to be imperfect, but capable of development. They move naturally, slowly,

toward perfection. Taken from the womb of the earth untimely, before fully developed, the base metals are like embryos taken from the mother's womb (Eliade, 1978). They are to be moved into the laboratory and further developed meticulously. This means that it is in the very nature of base metals to become gold, not in the sense of randomly "evolving," but because this potential is innate, inherent to their original state. The active desire of the base metals is to return to their source, to unite again with their true reality. The alchemists saw the developmental process within their vessels as the metal's teleological function to become a noble state of being from which they have emerged. They saw metal's fate. In the second case, philosophical alchemy deals with the metaphysics of light and darkness, which we shall discuss using Shi'ite alchemists and their philosophical foundations, which they took from the Qur'an and hadith.

In both cases, replacing the word "metal" or "darkness" with the word "consciousness," a depth psychologist can say that human ego-consciousness, too, moves naturally toward perfection by developing toward maturity and by moving toward its true origin. The individual's ego is the base metal, metaphorically, and the task is to transform it to gold-consciousness faster than its natural development, using alchemical methods of depth psychology. For Jung, this meant performing the work of becoming whole—the golden potential hidden within lead-consciousness. This potential is the divine within that wants to and must become light consciousness by the ego's going through many stages of sacrifices or dark states of consciousness. For Jung, this is the psyche's natural growth process, and to that end, in fact, is life's purpose (*telos*). It is the process of individuation.

For the old alchemists, the base metals corresponded to the heavenly planets, which were thought to be made of the same substance. Their unperfected nature echoed

planetary alignment above. The planets embodied metallurgically different stages of this transformative process. Metals found on earth were identified by their corresponding planetary symbols in alchemy, which is the reason astrological images appear in alchemy texts (see Figure 9). The moon, for instance, corresponds to silver and is pictured as a semicircle or crescent sign. The sun is depicted as a full circle, often with a dot in its center representing pure gold (image of the mandala or Self for Jung). Silver and gold are considered the two most precious metals and are special in alchemical texts written symbolically as Luna and Sol, or Queen and King, respectively. They are pairs of opposites.

The other metals and their corresponding planets are way stations to the goal of the work, which is Sol-consciousness. Luna symbolizes the middle position between earth and Sol in the human psyche. Between earth and Luna are Saturn (lead) and Jupiter (tin). Between Luna and Sol lie Venus (copper) and Mars (iron) (Burckhardt, 1967). From the alchemists or the Shi'ite perspective, this Sol-consciousness is needed as a principle. It is consciousness not of pure light, but it has the knowledge of pure light.

In the alchemy associated with Shi'ite texts, especially the *Ishrāqi* school of Suhrawardi (and also Haydar Amuli) where everything is a creation of God, hence things are nothing but light, Sol represents the active vertical pole of manifestation. Sol psychologically corresponds to the undifferentiated Light of Light (*nūr al anwār*), the masculine principle of the God-image in the Jungian sense. Luna represents the receptive or passive pole of light, symbolized by the horizontal plane, the feminine principle. She is only feminine, however, when compared with the Sol. Luna, in one sense, is dark. And in another sense, she is light. When she gives light, as opposed to receiving it from the Sol,

she transforms herself into an active masculine principle in relationship to the feminine earth. Here, Luna is active and dominant over the body. Although in her reflective, feminine capacity, she differentiates through her phases the undifferentiated Solar light she also carries within her womb. This is her own archetypal light. In other words, Luna does not give up her own light or the essence of who she is just because through her refractive mirror brings the Solar light to actuality in the world. Hence, she also represents the vertical pole of the reflective mind.

For seeing the Ashura ritual, it is important to keep in mind that Luna colors her angelic light like a triangular glass pyramid or a prism according to the recipient's ability to receive her light and darkness. Luna is light because she reveals to the mind a higher order of things. She is dark because her light acts as a veil to ego-consciousness (Nasr, 1964).

These two cosmic poles, vertical-solar and horizontal-lunar, cross and divide the original wholeness into four parts or elements: (a) air, (b) fire, (c) earth, and (d) water. The cross (+) is a symbol of equilibrium and balance of the elements and also symbolizes the tree of life or the philosophical tree (*fructus arboris*). Jung demonstrated that when these two cosmic poles are in disharmony, chaos ensues; when united with each other in harmony, they are shown encircled, which means that psychic life is in its totality, wholeness, oneness, or unity, representing the dynamics of the Self.

The alchemical work (*opus*) is the secret journey of human consciousness to its perfection. What Shi'ite scholars mean by light psychologically translates as light in the darkness, that is, in ego-consciousness, for "each light is an isthmus, or 'purgatory' (*Barzakh*), between the two luminosities above and below it" (Nasr, 1964, p. 72). Just as

base metals in the retort, in the glass vessel, go through torture, so does the unripe conscious mind go through internal suffering for its perfection. In the Ashura ritual, the process moves the participants toward healing or developing mature consciousness regarding the villains (antagonists) responsible for the Karbala tragedy.

The Alchemists divided the opus in two: the Lesser work and the Greater work (see Figures 5 and 6). The Greater work deals with Sol and the cross; the Lesser work, with Luna and the cross. All the other planets, or archetypal luminosities in the astrological sense, and their corresponding metals are fixed. They effect the human psyche with their archetypal multivalent colorings. In other words—according to a spiritual master and a Shi'ite disciple of Ibn al 'Arabi, Haydar Amuli (d. 1385), as cited in Corbin (1986)—the planetary gradation or hierarchy of being determines psychological functions, that is to say that they are assigned correspondently according to the virtue of a hierarchical rank of conscious states of knowing.

Burckhardt (1967) discussed the symbol of Venus (copper), for instance, as showing the solar circle above the cross. Venus represents the fourth stage or the first stage of the Greater work. Mars (iron) has the circle below the cross representing the fifth stage or the second stage of the Greater work. Venus and Mars describe the vertical movement of Sol consciousness. They express the completion of the work by the sun symbol, where the solar disc stands alone "bringing everything to its centre" (p. 189); "thus, what was only principally and potentially present in the earlier stages is here manifest" in *balance* (p. 191).

In the Lesser work, the symbol of Jupiter (tin) is the second stage of the opus. Here, the cross carries the crescent moon on its side. The Saturn (lead) symbol most often

the starting stage of the work is shaped as the crescent moon and is anchored below the cross. These two symbols correspond to the horizontal movement of Luna.

Although these stages are not fixed, each base metal/planet represents a stage in the holistic process of alchemy; therefore, as symbols, they require and show the attributes of either a lunar semicircle or a solar circle attached to the cross. Depending on the stage of the work, this means that either a solar or a lunar expression dominates each base metal or conscious contents (materia) in that position.

Mercury (quicksilver) is a special metal having both Sol and Luna in the top position of the cross (☿). Understanding Mercury is key to the opus, for it is the metal or consciousness which is both the container (feminine) of the contents and the active agent (masculine).

In our second case of a philosophical perspective of alchemy, color symbolism pertaining to philosophical alchemy, refers to viewing different colors in the outer objects, which are manifestations of a person's psychic structure. This concept, in Shi'ite thought, is not to say that the psyche projects colored light onto matter as if the matter is a colorless or a blank slate (*tabula rasa*). On the contrary, outer objects have colors as their own reality, but they are seen only according to an individual's own psychic colors. In other words, if the outer object is white and the psychic state is chaotic (black, in the *nigredo*), for example, then the object is perceived as black. The outer object would simulate a symbol that carries psychological meaning for the person. The person's reality depends on the psyche and its state of being and knowing.

Haeffner (1991) indicated that "Western alchemy has its roots in Gnosticism, and Hellenistic alchemists like Maria Prophetissa or Zosimos worked with a system of stages

designated by colours" (p. 208). Known to be students of the Shi'ite Imams, Jabir ibn Hayyan (d. 813 CE) and later Muhammad ibn Umail (d. 960 CE) were two alchemists who similarly worked with color symbolism. Jung was familiar with both authors.

The scheme of the stages (see Figure 8), according to Jung (1937/1968e), is as follows: first came the blackening, which represents the chaos of the mind or in Latin (the *nigredo*); then *albedo* (whitening); then *citrinitas* (yellowing), but the alchemists dropped this stage; and finally, *rubedo* (reddening), which represents the perfection of the work.

These stages represent the movement of a transformation of the prime matter (*prima materia*), the object on which the alchemist works. Gold is to be found in the *prima materia*; hence, for the alchemist, the matter is, in essence, gold.

Philosophically, this gold corresponded to the spirit (*pneuma*) or light (*phos*) in matter, or light in man. This light in man is able to create just as God creates, as *creatio continua,* the Islamic idea expounded upon by Ibn Sina (Avicenna), of continual creation of God in the world as He stands outside it (Nasr, 1993). This light in man is the philosophers' stone created or found at the end of the work. In this way, through the effort of purification and transforming to the level of divinity, the alchemist participates in God's creation in nature.

Alchemy, according to Avicenna, "and in his wake according to St Albert and St Thomas, belongs to a kind of magic. It [the stone] is created by the imagination of the Artifex, which produces—helped by astrological influences—a *magical transformation* of matter" (Ibn Umail, 2006, p. 36). In other words, by doing the psychological work, the alchemists realized philosophically the potential energy in human beings, which they called *homo maximus* in Latin, or *insān al kamil* in Arabic. These terms mean perfect

human or the Primordial Man, or "man of light" trapped in matter. This "man of light" is the earthly Adam in religious language, or as Jung (1942/1967c) amplified:

> The ancient teachings about the Anthropos or Primordial Man assert that God, or the world creating principle, was made manifest in the form of a "first-created" (*protoplastus*) man, usually of cosmic size. In India he is Prajāpati or purusha, who is also "the size of a thumb" and dwells in the heart of every man, like the Illiaster of Paracelsus. In Persia he is Gayomart (*gayōmaretan*, "mortal life"), a youth of dazzling whiteness, as is also said of the alchemical Mercurius. In the *Zohar* he is Metatron, who was created together with light. He is the celestial man whom we meet in the visions of Daniel, Ezra, Enoch, and also in Philo Judaeus. He is one of the principal figures in Gnosticism, where as always, he is connected with the question of creation and redemption. (p. 132)

In Shi'ite theosophical anthropology, he is the Imam, the object of *walayah* (a realm within the spirit world very close to God) (see Figure 7).

Symbols. Within the discipline of psychology, pivotal debates continue about the reality of symbols. According to Samuels et al. (1986), "Jung's theoretical break with Freud," for instance, "was partly over the issue of what is to be meant by 'symbol'; the concept, its intent or purpose and content" (p. 144). Hopcke (1999) suggested that Jung's understanding of a symbol is *that* which at best represents "something that can never be fully known" (p. 29). Clearly, some reflection is needed to understand symbols objectively.

First, the reality and purpose of symbols differ from people to people and perhaps culture to culture. On this basis, the process of individuation also differs from culture to culture. Second, from Hopcke's (1999) statement it appears that for Jung, the principle of symbols or symbolic images is always attached to the unconscious psyche. Consequently, the symbols can never be fully known; hence, they require a deeper analysis to bring their inner meanings to the upper layer of the psyche—that is, to consciousness.

Because this dissertation uses depth psychology as its lens and approach, it is important from the outset to see how Jung understood the reality of symbols in a deeper sense to compare and contrast with the Shi'ite approach to symbols, for this interdisciplinary study is to *understand* Shi'ite symbols. Thus, I shall continue to explain the reality of symbols as the dissertation moves forward. In the introductory section, however, I want to simplify the concept of symbols from both sides as best as possible.

Symbols According to Jung's Psychology. This study is concerned with the birth of Shi'ite symbols from archetypal contents that were confronted, either consciously or unconsciously, when a collective culture underwent a tragedy a long time ago and that still renews its suffering by recalling this tragedy every year. In discussing symbols, Jung (1964) explained, "The history of symbolism shows that everything can assume symbolic significance. . . . In fact, the whole cosmos is a potential symbol" (p. 257). Jung (1922/1966b) also differentiated a symbol from a sign. Signs, for Jung, were derived from known meanings concerned with the collective consciousness and excluded unconscious significance. Jung commented, "The true symbol differs essentially from this, and should be understood as *an intuitive idea* [emphasis added] that cannot yet be formulated in any other or better way" (p. 70). Intuitive ideas for Jung were difficult to

express fully from the position of consciousness. The best that can be said about intuitive ideas is that they are "hunches" or "gut feelings" of a deeper truth.

For Jung (1964), symbols were to be "seen" as an emerging phenomenon from both human consciousness *and* unconsciousness at the same time. Symbols, therefore, require the totality of the psyche to be born. As a product, people create them from the tension of two opposing forces. The symbolic process is a psychic phenomenon for Jung, and, therefore, can be viewed as a mediator, like a two-sided mirror, a structural bridge. That is the psyche, holding the tension of consciousness and the unconscious, reflecting the outer world to the inner, and vice versa.

The reason symbols can never be fully known makes sense psychologically because they are always anchored in or reflecting some aspect of the unknown psyche to ego-consciousness, the knower. It is as if the contents of the unconscious (archetypes), in which the ego is rooted, want to come up and be known, but either the limited capacity of human consciousness is unable to grasp fully the energy of these contents, or their essential reality is such that they must hold back this energy and only give what is necessary for the health of the psyche. As a case in point, if the person's consciousness is flooded with ideas, whether these ideas come from an inner collective unconscious or outer collective conscious source, the individual is in danger of developing psychosis.

According to Jungian scholar Jolande Jacobi (1959), a symbol is born when the archetype per se in the unconscious aspect of the psyche is "touched by consciousness." In other words, symbolic understanding, or the symbolic way of knowing, is when a person directs the attention toward the depths of an image, moving toward the meaning

and purpose which lies behind the image, which is a deeper reality hidden within the image that must be touched by consciousness in order for it to be known.

The unconscious, archetypal energies can also move toward consciousness, however. For Jung, these archetypal energies can manifest themselves to consciousness either as a biological expression of instincts or on the higher spiritual plane as religious ideas. “In the latter case,” according to Jacobi (1959), “the raw material of imagery and meaning [is] added to it, and the *symbol* is born” (p. 120).

Symbols in this dissertation are those which express a spiritual or religious idea within the conscious mind. In Jungian psychology, the spiritual sided-ness of a symbol does not necessarily mean what, in the contemporary sense, should be taken to mean something positive, good, or light. For Jung, a dark side is always present in things because symbols are invariably attached with or to the unconscious, which is darkness compared with consciousness. The raw, biological materials of energy and instinct, which are added to the image/symbol’s spiritual side, is always either compensatory or complementary to consciousness. This aspect of the two-sidedness of symbolic understanding in Shi’ite practice is further explored in this work. In the Ashura ritual, especially self-flagellation, the devotee’s behavioral actions toward his or her body correspond to a darker degree of spiritual activation and are significant.

The psyche has two systems (the unconscious and consciousness), according to Jung (1964); therefore, a symbol cannot be viewed from the one system alone. An image constructed by conscious intent is a sign in the Jungian sense, which can be recognized without difficulty by the use of known associations. In contrast, when consciousness is open to the expression of the unknown as “an intuitive idea,” or *that* other side of the

mirror (which is an archetypal expression that surfaces into the subjective consciousness), then the image grips the individual with all the psychic functions, feelings, thoughts, senses, and intuitions, becoming a true symbol in the Jungian sense.

For Jung (1964), symbols were teleologically "pregnant with meaning," whether positive or negative and hence, creative. They create and transform the conscious mind. They synthesize the opposites, uniting opposing psychic functions through what Jung (1958/1969g) called "the transcendent function."

Also, for Jung (1921/1971), "whether a thing is a symbol or not depends chiefly upon the attitude of the observing consciousness" (p. 475). Further, even when the attitude of a person is symbolic, the symbolic experience is hard to verbalize. Symbols have goals and purposes, to be actualized in humanity with new meanings as consciousness grows. Old symbols die, becoming symptoms or signs when divorced from their archetypal structure. New ones are formed by similar archetypal connections with a different mode of consciousness.

Thus, spiritual aspirations, according to Jung (1921/1971), can be responsible for the birth of a symbol. But a new symbol can also emerge from the dark, the "lowest and most primitive levels of the psyche" as well (pp. 479–480).

Archetypes from a Jungian perspective express a spectrum of meanings spanning from light to dark, from the spiritual rays of ultraviolet to the earthly infrared. Moreover, symbols, for Jung, ontologically stand at any level of the archetypal spectrum, and they are inseparable polarities inherent to all archetypal expressions. Archetypes expressed through symbols mediate the psychic tension between thesis *and* antithesis, acting as the

"third" thing that provides resolution to the conflict. They are necessary for the healing processes of individuation or becoming whole.

Jungian psychology suggests that true symbols are not formed until the contents of the collective unconscious are activated: "When the contents of the collective unconscious—the archetypes—emerge from the psychoid into the psychic realm," Jacobi (1959) contended, "they must be regarded as true symbols, because they stem from the life history of the universe and not from that of the individual" (p. 89). Although Jung always maintained that the personal factor (complex) is involved in unconscious expressions, Jacobi claimed that the root of it all is archetypal, which goes beyond the personal. Both points are valid because as will become evident in this study, a symbol represents history and at the same time, it is beyond history. I am therefore using the term "symbol" as understood by Jung to stand between the *deep* consciousness (that is, ancient history) and the *deep* unconsciousness (beyond time and history) where symbols can be used as images that powerfully represent to consciousness the reality of the unconscious archetypes, or, in the case of the Ashura ritual, religious ideas.

Symbols According to Shi'ism. In Islam, if a *word* is to be considered revealed, as the Qur'an is viewed, then it "must participate in history and at the same time transcends it" (Ayoub, 1984, p. 1). A keyword worth noting here is "participate." Ayoub did not say "*is* history". He continued: "This earthly Qur'an, however, is only the concrete revelation whose original archetype is with God in the Well-Guarded Tablet (*al-lawh al-mahfuz*) (Q. 85:22). Hence its true inner meaning is with God, for 'no one knows its true exegesis [*ta'wil*] except God (Q. 3:7)'" (p. 1). In the Islamic sense based on the Qur'an, a symbol is an *āyah*, which means it is an image with a hierarchical structure of

meaning that stands between the human being and God. For Muslims, the Qur'an is *āyat 'ullah* (a sign of God or His Word).

In the Islamic view, although creating and/or depicting pictorial images of God Allah (*allāh, al-ilāh,* the god) is forbidden due to the picture's static nature, His existential Being in the world plays an archetypal role in symbolism; therefore, the Qur'an is full of symbolic imagery. In the Shi'ite faith, imagining a saint, an emblem, a Qur'anic story, a dream, or a poem is highly encouraged. More specifically, it is also a crucial part of the Ashura ritual.

In Shi'ite thought, which is more esoteric in the mystical sense than orthodox Sunnism, the real meanings and/or contents of a symbol are considered alive within the Imagination of God (theophanic imagination or *tajalli ilāhi*).[10] One holy utterance (*hadith qudsi*) is "so called because in it the divinity speaks on the tongue of the Prophet: *I was a Hidden Treasure and I loved to be known, and so I created the world*" (Lings, 2005, p. 1). This hadith has two meanings. First, conveyed by Ibn al 'Arabi, writes Corbin (1969):

> A Divine Being [is] alone in His unconditioned essence, of which we know only on thing: precisely the sadness of the primordial solitude that makes Him yearn to be revealed in beings who manifest Him to himself insofar as He manifests Himself to them. "I was a hidden Treasure, I yearned to be known. That is why I produced creatures, in order to be known in them . . ." This phase is represented as the sadness of the divine Names suffering anguish in nonknowledge because no one names them . . . (p. 184)

The divine Names are hidden but when they come to be known in the creatures, they are the creative meanings, which are in essence, sacred imaginings. This leads to the second meaning, which is that all aspects of the created universe are symbols expressing His Names or archetypes (*a'yān thābita*) within God's unique mind. All things are a manifestation (or the Sigh) of God in the perceptible world, forming a moving symbol in nature (*harakat shawqīya*), acting as a mirror to the observer in meditation or among those possessing *taqwa*, God-weariness.

Every real meaning or higher reality of a thing/image in the universe, however, is hidden, concealed, or unseen behind a veil (*hijab*) with God Himself. A symbol is the theophany of the occult, or hidden, or *bātin* aspect of God's Names (Corbin, 1958/1969, 1980/ 1986). Thus, a symbol in Islam primarily behaves like a veil that hides God's essential reality. A symbol only reveals or unveils (*kashf*) aspects of the divine according to the preparedness of a thing—that is to say, according to the form of an image that dictates its measured capacity to withstand God's reality, His Light, His Power, or His Treasures. That is why in the Acts of Peter, "essentially all he can say is this: *Talem eum vidi qualem capere potue* (I saw him in such a form as I was able to take in)" (Corbin, 1954/1964, p. 69). The Qur'an says:

> Nor is there anything but with Us are the *Treasuries* thereof, and We send it not down save in known measure . . . and verily it is We who give life and make to die, and We are the Inheritor. (25:21-23)

In short, a divine source is present behind every created thing in the world, which is a symbol pointing to an unseen archetypal reality. This reality contains God's Treasures,

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[10] See Corbin, 1969, chapter III for the meaning of the Creator-Creature (*Al-Haqq al-mutakhayyal*), where

which can, in turn, be interpreted as archetypes. Accordingly, the cosmos and its contents glorify God by disclosing His Treasures *and* at the same time guarding or hiding His presence. The Qur'anic Treasures of God, which for Shi'a scholars mean God's Names, are only revealed to a certain degree to those human beings with powers of spiritual or esoteric preparedness, with imagination, belief, understanding, and knowledge of symbolic interpretation. That is why two types of alchemy exist: the outer practical and the inner theoretical (*theoria* in the Jungian sense of amplification).

> Corbin (1969) connects the symbolic to the Imagination. He writes:
>
> The intermediary between the world of Mystery *('ālam al-ghayb*) and the world of visibility *('ālam al shahadat*) can only be the Imagination, since the plane of being and the plane of consciousness which it designates is that in which the Imcorporial Beings of the world of Mystery "take body" (which does not yet signify a material, physical body), and in which, reciprocally, natural, sensuous things are spiritualized or "immaterialized . . ." The Imagination is the "place of apparition" of spiritual beings, Angels and Spirits, who in it assume the figures and forms of their "apparitional forms"; and because in it the pure concepts (*ma'ānī*) and sensory data (*mahsūsāt*) meet and flower into personal figures prepared for the events of spiritual dramas, it is also the place where all "divine history" is accomplished, the stories of the prophets, for ecample, which have meaning because they are theophanies; whereas on the plane of sensory evidence on which is enacted what we call *History*, the

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there is no concept of a *creatio ex nihilo*.

> meaning, that is, the true nature of those stories, which are essentially "symbolic stories," cannot be apprehended. (pp. 189-190)

Symbolic interpretation in the present context means that one is to go inward, connecting the image to experience the higher archetypal meaning of things. Unlike the modern progressive mentality in which the past is always seen as a time of ignorance to be superseded, "for primordial man everything, inward or outward, was transparent: in experiencing a symbol he experienced its Archetype. He was thus able to rejoice in being outwardly surrounded and inwardly adorned by Divine Presences" (Lings, 2005, p. 3). In other words, human beings in the past were not cut off from the divine presence in the world; instead, they lived a symbolic way of knowing. The Qur'an verses (*āyah*), which simultaneously offer the Divine Names that outwardly manifest (*zāhir*) to and are inwardly hidden (*bātin*) from God's creatures, are considered symbols par excellence in Shi'ite thought.

The ideas of *zāhir* and *bātin* must now be kept in mind, for they are the keys to Shi'ite theosophy and alchemical thinking, which differ somewhat from Jung's philosophy of body-consciousness and spirit-consciousness. The former for Jungians is related to the unconscious aspect of the psyche, 'matter' distinct from 'spirit' where the former derives from outside, and the latter arrives from within. This idea will be made clearer as this study moves forward. For instance, we read a confusing statement by Jung (1953/1968d). He writes,

> Every archetype is capable of endless development and differentiation . . . In an outward form of religion where all the emphasis is on the outward figure (hence where we are dealing with a more or less complete

> projection), the archetype is identical with externalized ideas but remains unconscious as a psychic factor. When an unconscious content is replaced by a projected image to that extent, it is cut off from all participation in and influence on the conscious mind. Hence it largely forfeits its own life, because prevented from exerting the formative influence on consciousness natural to it; what is more, it remains in its original form—unchanged, for nothing changes in the unconscious. (p. 11)

This means that for Jung, the unconscious contents, via the medium of the human psyche, are projected onto matter unchanged because they have not been touched by consciousness. They remain in the dark, unbeknownst to the mind of a person, and remain in the fetters of physis. Therefore, we have two places where archetypes live: in the spiritual world of the unseen and the material world of the seen.

In Shi'ite thinking, this notion of the outer and inner that Jung is talking about would be the ideas of *zāhir* and *bātin*. For them, they are the two realities of God's presence in the world. A Shi'a person will think of *zāhiri* things, or symbols, or images as what we are conscious of, meaning that they are physically visible in the world, while *bātini* things would be in the unconscious to us. This is correct because the *bātini* things are invisible to the physical eye, but they can be seen from an archetypal or imaginal eye (*'ayn al khayal*) (Chittick, 1989). So, where is the confusion? I think the confusion is not with Jung, but with Jungians, where some have interpreted the archetype of the Spirit in a one-sided fashion. For them, body or matter is more or less the unconscious aspect of God, and the word "spirit" is often used in texts to designate 'ego-consciousness'. This

discussion will become more apparent in part two of this study when we deal with the stages of coniunctio of the ego/Self.

When the word "self" is taken as the ego-consciousness, it is differentiated from the "Self" (with the capital S) as the archetype of the wholeness, although the latter always includes and envelopes the former from a Jungian perspective. The differentiated ego in Jungian psychology is the mind-spirit and the Self can be seen as the sphere which is supraordinate to the mind-spirit. To avoid confusion of this distinction, I use the terms "self" and "spirit" interchangeably to denote Divine Spirit *in* humans that has separated itself out. Capitalized Self or Spirit denotes the totality of the Absolute Divine that transcends white and black.

In Shi'a thought, the idea of the Self in mankind and the archetype of the Spirit as the universal principle can also be considered as two rays of One God. This opens the idea of polarity and all opposites in alchemy, whether Christian or Islamic, which signifies light and dark, hot and cold, good and evil, upper and lower, hidden and revealed, and every possible polarity. Polarity in Shi'ism is the metaphysical idea of the One Absolute God separating Himself into two: (a) Him as His *dhat* (pronounced *zaath*) or *wujūd*, and (b) Him as His creation or *maujūd*.

In the alchemical sense, these two cosmoses in harmony gave birth to the third. In looking at spiritual development in alchemy, Bernoulli (1960) noted:

> According to Geber, the task of alchemy is to "produce the elixir, in which all ingredients stand to one another in fully harmonious relation, so that it becomes a third cosmos, side by side with the macrocosm and microcosm, and a symbol of religious truth. Thus it can bear the religious name of

> ‘imam,’ for the human manifestation of the godhead in the ‘imam’ establishes the realm of God on earth.” (p. 318, note 16)

This profound saying presents a third type of alchemy, Imamology in Shi’ism. It encapsulates the separating of God from His creation and also suggests a human realization of his divine nature through the symbol of the Imam. Imam, for Geber, is the elixir, the philosophers’ stone, through which the alchemists achieved spiritual perfection. The symbolic expression of the spirit of Imams in Shi’a thought appears to embody all of the divine qualities in human life. The “imam” (with the lower-case *i*) in humans necessarily manifests the divine attributes, colors of light, or God’s signs (*āyah*) through the corporeal reality, as the tangible world; therefore, people get a glimpse of why Shi’as call Imams “signs of God” (*āyat ullah*) (see Figure 7).

As far as the nature of symbols is concerned, a cross-disciplinary perspective is needed for interpreting texts, although some perennial philosophers might disagree. Jungian scholars are close, at least psychologically, in defining the term symbol in the same way Shi’ite’s define the term *āyah* (a sign or verse of the Qur’an or the words of God). This is a delicate matter of intense debate. For instance, Nasr (1976) opined that “the interpretation is full of grave errors since the fundamental differences between Spirit and Soul are not emphasized by Jung” (p. 196). Von Franz (1992) writes “what spirit is in itself, in its trans-psychic essence, we cannot know. . . Matter. . . we cannot define its trans-psychic essence. . . Thus spirit and matter are two unknown realms of existence which we call inner and outer reality. . . we can only observe their effects on our psychic system” (p. 157). For Jung, the soul is materialized spirit that suffers (Jung, 1955–1956/1970a). We can also add, using the logic of depth psychology, that the soul is a

spiritual matter that suffers. This puts the tension of suffering in a middle position, between spirit and matter. It is the psychic domain which suffers. The problem which Nasr is bringing out is that Jung's psychology is now able to discern the psychic projection onto the matter but not the spirit.

I think it is important to note that Shi'a Muslims understand *āyah* as exoteric first—a living presence of God in the world, as an expression of empirical evidence or proof of God's existence. If suffering is a psychic experience, it should be seen phenomenologically. A Jungian interpretation would be to say that the God-*image* can be experienced consciously in daily life (Samuels et al., 1986, p. 61). Therefore, interpreting *āyah* in the Jungian sense within depth psychological understanding of archetypal expression in the world is an appropriate definition of the *zāhiri* aspect of a symbol, as opposed to the archetype as such, its *bātini* aspect. In other words, *Āyah* in the Qur'an "employs the term to refer to anything in the universe that gives news of God, including all-natural, human, and social phenomena; scriptures; the extraordinary acts and miracles of the prophets, and its own verses" (Murata & Chittick, 1994, p. 338). From this inward perspective, we can see the suffering in the ritual.

Shi'as take this further in saying that the idea of *āyah* refers not just to the prophets, but also their Imams. This notion is of the Imams being *āyat ullah* (signs of God or Face of God), but in a way also amplifying the meaning of *āyah* (signs), or the verses of the Qur'an that are ambiguous (*mutashabeh*). These signs are similar to the Jungian definition of living symbols where understanding them is not only subjective (consciousness) but also absolutely unknown (unconscious or objective). This means

āyah belong to God alone, as the light of God, they are not fully hidden as His Treasures unfold in the cosmos.

The Symbolic. Jung (1921/1971) noted that a living symbol points to the "best possible formulation of a relatively unknown thing," and a sign stands as a token of or designates a known thing (p. 474). To reiterate, if an image born in the psyche clearly and associatively expresses a fact which was already known consciously, then that image ceases to be symbolic, for it is no longer connected with the unknown—the unconscious psyche. Jung determined that a symbol must have a divine(d) character that carries possibilities of a yet unknown truth rather than a known truth. Jung (1921/1971) claimed that "since every scientific theory contains a hypothesis and is, therefore, an anticipatory description of something still essentially unknown, it is a symbol" (p. 475). A symbol for Jung not only connects but also belongs to an unknowable reality; therefore, symbolic expressions are the product of archetypal raw material in its original sense that emerges into consciousness, which gives the expression a graspable form.

The two-sided nature of a symbolic image—namely, its outer manifestation and its hidden meanings and ideas—requires clarification. First, as soon as the symbolic expression of an image comes into the realm of human intelligibility from purely unknown ideas, it loses the quality of being absolutely hidden, becoming only relatively hidden for ego-consciousness. In other words, the conscious coloring of an image or symbolic meaning veils its full potential and can only express its hidden meanings by means of the egoic nature of multiple associations, limited preconceptions, and learned behaviors. The symbol functions as a representation of the unknown, the unconscious archetype, which is perceived only to the degree to which ego-consciousness is able to

grasp. Only a partial meaning of a symbol is thus formulized in human thought. A certain innate ideal meaning breaks through in the world of the image, which the ego is able to recognize insightfully via imagination. Second, for Jung, unless the archetypal hidden contents find some intelligible form, they cannot communicate any meaning to consciousness.

The archetypal content or the hidden aspect of the unknown must give up its seclusion to be known because, for Jung, the archetype as purely unknown is inaccessible to consciousness. A symbol must be a joint creative act of both consciousness and unconscious, manifested and hidden, anchored in the outer reality of sensing images or signs, and at the same time, via imagination with the inner worlds of meaning and intuitive knowing. To move from the one side of the outer image to the deeper layers of symbolic understanding requires a middle ground that can connect archetypal meanings and their manifestation in images. To reach a symbolic understanding, one has to step out of the sphere of the egoic world into the realm of the unconscious. One aspect of this study is to compare how Jung understood the psychological reality of a symbol with what Shi'a Muslims consider the inward meaning of *āyah* as a sign.

Transference/Countertransference. Jung differed from Freud's observation of the transference phenomenon, which was based only on the personal unconscious. For Jung, the very essence of the transference phenomenon was due to the collective contents of an archetypal nature, especially that of the personified form of the alchemist's Mercurius, or the mythic God Hermes. These personifications are considered symbolic figures in alchemy and Greek mythology and are the messengers between the human

world and the world of the Gods—that is to say, between the conscious and the unconscious. In an analysis, Jung (1946/1966c) explained:

> Once an unconscious content is constellated, it tends to break down the relationship of conscious trust between doctor and patient by creating, through projection, an atmosphere of illusion which either leads to continual misinterpretations and misunderstandings, or else produces a most disconcerting impression of harmony. (p. 187)

Although the phenomenon of transference in this negative sense is important in psychotherapy within the doctor and patient relationship, it is also important between the researcher (in this case, me) and the object of research (the Ashura ritual). I, therefore, lookout for the transference of my own unconscious bias or projections in interpreting Shi'ite symbols. As such, they are noted in light of what Jung called "the spirit of Mercurius" because transference has a bi-directional scheme. In therapy, not only do patients transfer the contents of their unconscious to the doctor, but the doctor counters the field of analysis and projects onto the patient his or her own unconscious contents, too. This chaotic admixture of the unconscious contents (*prima materia* of the alchemist) often becomes the beginning of the work holding the tension of the psychic field. It is here that, paradoxically, most insightful meanings such as "truth, goodness, and beauty" are often found (Jung, 1946/1966c, p. 189).

Transcendent Function. For Jung (1943/1966a), the transcendent function is "based on real and 'imaginary,' or rational and irrational, data, thus bridging the yawning gulf between conscious and unconscious" (p. 80). It is a psychological *process* or work capable of uniting the opposites. It is the bridging of the space between unconscious and

conscious "by way of the symbol" (Samuels et al., 1986, p. 150). "It is a natural process," claimed Jung (1943/1966a), "a manifestation of the energy that springs from the tension of opposites and it consists in a series of fantasy-occurrences which appear spontaneously in dreams and visions" (p. 80). I am using the term *transcendent function* to signify the symbolic work done in the Ashura ritual unconsciously that creates meaning and purpose, "a work which involves both action and suffering" (p. 80).

I am also using this term as a method in this dissertation, where the imaginal approach in the work allows room for the transcendent function to bridge the interior process and exterior acts of the Ashura ritual. Moreover, I am using this bridging process in an interdisciplinary way to illuminate one discipline from the point of view of the other. On the one hand, Shi'ism and its symbols are interpreted using depth psychology, and on the other hand, depth psychology is interpreted by way of Shi'ism. Although the Ashura ritual should be approached with respect and seriousness on my part, to achieve a conscious understanding of its unconscious forces, I must allow a playful space whereas a researcher, I can enter into the process I am describing—that is, the spiritual experiences that take place imaginatively and creatively in the religious events of Ashura.

In this investigation, because the transcendent function relies on my unconscious and consciousness—that is, what I do not know and what I do know about the ritual—both should be allowed to come together to form new understanding, new knowledge. The objects of this study are the experiences of the participants, their cosmological perspective and context, and the transformative processes of the soul. "This continual process of getting to know the counterposition in the unconscious," says Jung (1955-

56/70a), is the transcendent function (p. 200). Thus, as an investigator, I honor the worldview of Shi'ism without reducing it to a particular understanding (see Figure 4).

The Researcher's Relationship to the Topic

I was born in Karachi, Pakistan, on June 5, 1972. As a high school chemistry teacher, my mother wanted me to be a medical doctor and thus enrolled me in an army school with a British curriculum. She also tutored local children at our home in the evenings and she had me sit as a third person as if to say, "It's lesson time." I recall her asking a student a question for which she never answered: "When you burn paper or bone to ashes, can the ashes return to their original form?" She voiced this question that has been with me ever since—with her timbre and tonality.

The Western-style education started for me at an early age—learning the hard sciences, mathematics, and English. Though English was an important language to learn for school, it was still my second. Even though my mother loved science, she also saw to it that I read the Qur'an. I remember being influenced by worldly things such as family prestige, social status, and money, but as a child, I felt more affinity toward playing cricket, flying a kite, listening to Sufi music (*qawwali*), and practicing calligraphy.

My father, a contemplative man, often told me about the tragedies of the India/ Pakistan split, which was a manifestation of religious intolerance, a division between Hinduism and Islam. He often took me to Shi'a gatherings (*majalis*) that start with the Qur'anic recitations (*tilāwat*). In school before classes, students were also required to attend a ceremonial collective prayer and Qur'anic recitation. Islamic rituals were more than a part of life.

I was directly exposed to Islamic tenets, prayer, fasting, and powerful Friday sermons that inspired and conditioned people by the thousands. It was the Muharram gatherings (*majlis*) that included spellbinding and episodic ceremonies (*nohā khani, marāthi*, *ta'ziyeh khani, rowzeh khani*) that stirred my imagination in my adolescent years. The integration of these remarkable rituals comes together on the Day of Ashura.

I witnessed and participated in more extreme Shi'ite ceremonial rituals such as *mātam* (chest, head beating). More importantly, though, I was not a participant in the extremist form of self-flagellation or bloodletting in the ritual of Ashura, but I have a firsthand experience of what goes on behind the scenes. Describing this tragic psychosomatic passion from the researcher's point of view is therefore important for the topic because it can show the reader the doctrinally inscribed meanings and gripping emotions behind the devotee's actions.

I have witnessed these conditioned and hypnotic behaviors that have and can understandably result in weak, confused, and fractured ego-personalities. In my experience, some participants develop symptoms such as unstable moods, bipolar symptoms, and depression by their teenage years, and/or they have succumbed to a one-sided fundamentalist belief in adult life. In the latter, I, too, saw myself going in that direction, but I always felt a force, which instilled in me something like doubt. When I think about it, I suspect this force was voiced in my brain through my mother's question to her students and me.

The point is that I was exposed as a child to Western-style education in Islamic culture. This culture lacked progressive technologies; however, it was rich in agriculture. I witnessed people garden their landscape and cultivate it as art. An earthy scent was in

the atmosphere when it rained. I remember playing in the mud, playing games with stones and marbles, and running through the farm fields away from our house. This house was my grandfather's house, where he died when I was about three years old. This culture, as my grandfather saw it, however, was corrupt from within. I witnessed a murder at the age of seven.

Then, in 1983, my family moved to New York City. This was a gray concrete world, difficult to adapt to at first. I got into many fights on the streets and in school. Bullies called me names, poked pencil lead in my back, and whispered in my ear while I was in pain, "Go back to where you come from!" The only friend I saw was in the cinema personality of Bruce Lee. I found solace in his words to me: "Be like water, my friend!" So I learned his form of martial arts called *Jeet Kune Do* (a way of interception) for a few years. For me, when I think about it, it was a way of self-defense from ingnorance.

I graduated high school, but a nostalgic feeling haunted me.

This feeling manifested itself as an insight or awareness when I enrolled in college. I noticed that educated Americans, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, were too rigid in their thinking, too "scientific," too rationalistic and one-sided. They viewed religious matters as meaningless. They held a secular attitude behind whatever religious beliefs they outwardly paid lip service. In my community, to go to a religious function became an excuse to have a good meal. After a while, I felt a certain sense of doubt in my own image that related to these secular values—a doubt about whether I identified with them. And perhaps the same doubt was the reason that kept me from religion *and* protected me from secular fundamentalism. For the scientific, materialistic, and "American" worldview was alien to me.

As time passed, I recognized a feeling within me that gained more energy. It was like a nagging voice from my Alter Ego telling me that "the world you come from differs from the one you are exposed to at present." I started seeking answers to the deeper meaning and purpose of life, and for me, this was a serious matter. This meant that meaning and purpose were to be sought elsewhere than the biological sciences based on Darwinian evolution that I was studying at the time. Why was that?

Basically, it was because the experiences I had of American academic culture at that point in my life seemed to be clearly oppressing, in fact, erasing my old spiritual beliefs. To bring this point home, I quote what Jung (1963) said to his wife Emma in a letter dated September 18, 1909, from Albany, New York. He described his visit to America:

> The hundred thousand enormously deep impressions I am taking back with me from this wonderland cannot be described with the pen. Everything is too big, too immeasurable. Something that has gradually been dawning upon me in the past few days is the recognition that here an ideal potentiality of life has become reality. Men are as well off here as the culture permits; women badly off. We have seen things here that inspire enthusiastic admiration, and things that make one ponder social evolution deeply. As far as technological culture is concerned, we lag miles behind America. But all that is frightfully costly and already carries the germ of the end in itself. (p. 368)

I do not want to get into the detail of what this frightful germ means. Perhaps only pointing to René Guénon's (2004) *The Crises of the Modern World*, all I can say here

is that what these “hundred thousand enormously deep impressions” were for Jung, were for me exoteric in the sense of reflecting secular views. I did not dismiss American values, however, for they offered me a new perspective. Like Jung, I sensed the significance of the extroverted culture from an intuitive place, which stands in sharp contrast to the world I was born in.

While still enrolled in the biology program at Stony Brook University, I started reading philosophy and took a course on Islam with Dr. William C. Chittick. This course made an enormous impression on me from a deeper sense of knowing and being. After taking some more courses with Dr. Chittick and Dr. Sachiko Murata, I had to reorient myself, so I traveled back to my home country of Pakistan, and I also visited Saudi Arabia to make a pilgrimage to Mecca with my mother. Immediately, I sensed a turn in my life (*anagnorisis*). My passion for Islam and humanities grew, which not only led me to enroll in the comparative religious studies program at Stony Brook as my second major, but also to read more philosophy books. I finished two undergraduate degrees—one in Biology and the other in Religious Studies.

Soon after, I started working with my mother as a metallurgical chemist in New York. She trained me how to do fire assays of gold, silver, platinum, and palladium, which she had learned from her older brother. I took over the business in a year and expanded the business to jewelry making. This involved silver, gold, and gemstones. After work, however, I often found myself attending lectures at the Kabbalah Centre or the Jung Foundation a few blocks away. I was seeking what the old alchemists called the philosophers’ stone.

I certainly did not know this then. I only knew my gut feelings. Plucked from the roots and planted in an unfamiliar land, I felt exiled. I had to adapt to the new. This alternative world gave us opportunities, a good life, and I thought then "I finally found my profession" working in the precious metals and diamond industry. After all, everyone wanted to be in New York City, the city that never sleeps. When I attended large conferences and was asked about what I do, I responded boldly, "I am a metallurgical chemist!" A prestigious title, it was in fact a work of separating gold from impure metals—the old alchemical science I did not understand then that it would help me see and understand Jung's theories.

My first shallow reading of Jung was back in Stony Brook, and I did not understand. It was the forward to *The I Ching* or *Book of Changes* translated into English by Richard Wilhelm (Jung, 1924/1967b). This book, along with *The Tao of Islam,* was required in a course I took with Dr. Sachiko Murata with the appealing title, "Feminine Spirituality." In this course, Sufi philosophy merged with oriental thought opened my imagination to the metaphysics of Ibn al 'Arabi, Rūmi, and Ikhwān al-Safā, especially in parallel with Taoism. I started sitting with Dr. Murata and Dr. Chittick during their office hours. These visits and the events of September 11, 2001 led me to meet with Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who inspired me to read more philosophy and delve into Henry Corbin's work. This, in turn, led me back to Jung.

Through my exposure to perennial philosophy and attendance at many visiting talks at Stony Brook, such as by Jacques Derrida, I found the crux of Jung's thought to be simply different, which oddly connected ancient religious wisdom traditions. "Here is a man speaking about the nature of the soul (*al fitrat-al-nafs*) in a unique way," I recall

saying to myself. This was well before enrolling at Pacifica Graduate Institute. For example, I once read Jung's (1954/1968b) description of an archetypal experience that resonated with my tradition. He said that meaning comes by "surrender of our own powers, not artificially willed but forced upon us by nature" (p. 32). I thought this was very similar to the teachings of my faith because the word *Islam* means surrender to the will of God.

Was Jung saying to me that God is the Self as an Archetype in a man? If so, then is it God or the human being who goes through the alchemical process of transformation? These questions led me to Gnosticism, but the refined answer came in two long paragraphs by von Franz (as cited in Ibn Umail, 2006). In making Jung's (1954/1967f) interpretation of "Visions of Zosimos" simpler and easy to understand, von Franz (2006) commented:

> In his comment to this Zosimos text, Jung stresses that this God-man figure is more Gnostic than Christian and resembles the Iranian Gayomart, but like in later Christian alchemy this God-man figure is a sort of paradigm of sublimation, i.e., of the freeing of the soul from the grip of the astrological powers. He also is identical with Adam and has a quaternarian structure like the philosophers' stone in the whole of alchemy.
>
> Zosimos uses for the chemical process of transformation the word *taricheia*, which means embalming. He makes it therefore explicit that what he describes in his treatise *Peri Aretes* is what happens psychologically during the embalming of the corpse of Osiris until he

> resurrects. In his treatise, however, Zosimos tells us what happens in the form of several dream visions. C. G. Jung has interpreted these visions extensively and has shown that they refer to an inner psychic process of transformation, which we now call the process of individuation. It is a process by which one becomes aware of and learns to relate to an inner core of one's psyche, which corresponds to the God-image of all religions. (as cited in Ibn Umail, 2006, p. 20)

There it was again, the word "image." It is not God, the Absolute, that goes through change as I had thought, but He as Adam in the human beings, who are His image in the Islamic sense. It is the image of God that people carry deep within them as an inner figure, and this inner figure is buried in the unconscious. He is a *psychopomp*, only when individuals relate or direct their consciousness to it. Von Franz, explaining ego suffering, observed:

> In the vision of Zosimos, human beings are tortured by a priest figure who is also himself dismembered until he becomes the "man of gold" which is the name for the Anthropos or the inner God-man (Osiris) in every individual. It is as if during the embalming process the human side of the dead person and its divine core are simultaneously and mutually tortured in order to produce the immortal inner personality, i.e., the philosophers' stone. (as cited in Ibn Umail, 2006, p. 20)

At Pacifica Graduate Institute, especially during my second and third year, I started thinking that the Ashura ritual experience somehow parallels Jung's method of explaining this God-man dynamic via Gnostic interpretation of alchemy. At first, I was

skeptical about how I was relating Jung's theories with those of Shi'ism—for Shi'as throughout most of their history, too, like the Christian Gnostics, were the minority in Islam. After many years of studying depth psychology and linking Jung's approach to alchemy to the phenomena of Shi'ite rituals as symbolic acts of surrendering to a bigger personality for the aim of purification and becoming whole, it made sense for me to work on this dissertation topic. As a result, I can now say with confidence that these two disciplines—namely, Shi'ite philosophy and Jungian psychology, have significantly shaped my worldview to date, though they are opposites and/or different in more ways than the perennial philosophers' claim.

Another important relationship I have with this topic is that I was born into a Shi'ite family—Syed (pl. *Sadaat/ashraaf*). This is relevant to my personal relationship to the topic from the point of view of having an ancestral lineage connected to it—because of the Syed family claim to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (*Najeeb-ut-tarfain*). Hyder (2006) described what it is like being a Syed:

> Karbala is not only a part of my academic heritage; it is also part of my personal world. I am a product of a milieu in which the remembrance of Karbala . . . consoled mourners during funerals and brought sobriety to weddings, buoyed arguments of socioreligious reform during heated discussions, and loomed large in the literary, visual, and aural aesthetics to which my family subscribed. (p. vii)

My genealogy, according to my relatives, traces back at least to the Safavid period (1501–1736 CE). To prove the authenticity of my *shajra* (family tree) through evidence is another matter that leads to a place in India, but I was able to make a photocopy of the

old document from one of my uncles. The Syed lineage, nonetheless, considers themselves to be the possessors of a rich intellectual background, and spiritually connected through the bloodline of the Imams. They also have contributed significantly to Islamic thought while being persecuted under the rule of Sunni dynasties. This is important from a contextual point of view and the hereditary nature of archetypes. I believe, however grandiose it may sound, that this information is essential for an authentic study of the ritual, as it comes from a researcher who understands Shi'ism from the point of view of alchemical hermeneutics, that is to say, from the inner and outer experiences.

To conclude this section, I want to add that in the last two decades of my life; I have traveled in Spain, France, Holland, Italy, Greece, Turkey, United States of America including Alaska, Meso-America, the Middle East, Morocco, Egypt, and South Africa. I have made friends from a mixture of cultural backgrounds. Fascinated with rituals all my life, I have witnessed the affective states of people on this planet from their own cultural settings. Consequently, I find myself to be in a unique position, holding the tension between understanding the Karbala narrative as expressed in the passion play of the ritual and understanding Western and Eastern ontology.

The Relevance of the Topic for Depth Psychology

According to Jung (1952/1967e), it is important to elucidate to the modern person the foundations of religious experience:

> I analyze abstruse religious symbols and trace them back to their origins, my sole purpose is to conserve, through understanding, the values they represent, and to enable people to think symbolically once more, as the

> early thinkers of the church were still able to do. This is far from implying an arid dogmatism. It is only when we, today, think dogmatically, that our thought becomes antiquated and no longer accessible to modern man. Hence a way has to be found which will again make it possible for him to participate spiritually in the substance of the Christian message. (pp. 229–230)

Following Jung in this way, although with some exceptions principally in my application of his method to Shi'ism rather than Christianity, I take a similar approach to this study because the ritual of Ashura provides rich symbolic content that can lead to a better understanding of the Shi'ite unconscious psyche. The Ashura ritual in turn offers something unique to a depth psychological analysis because it occurs every year with the aim of healing. In this way, it cultivates each participant's psyche through regular practice, making it available for a normative, in-depth study of the individuation process as embodied in a living religious tradition that aims at the development of consciousness. Ashura is another doorway through which depth psychologists may peek not only clinically into the ego-Self dynamic of an individual, but also the human-God relationship of a Shi'ite culture, thereby understanding the esoteric dimension of Islam.

By analyzing and understanding the ritual of Ashura symbolically, my research seeks to contribute to depth psychology in two ways. First, this research offers a psychological analysis of the ritual to the Shi'ite community, and second, it provides a deeper understanding of Islamic symbols and Shi'ite cosmology to the field of depth psychology.

Observing the Ashura ritual. The observances of the ritual and their historical expressions are copious in published works. But they might not provide a way of understanding the role and significance of the unconscious psyche, especially in the ritual-stages of Ashura using alchemy. Through this study, I strived to fill this void and honor traditional as well as modern views of spirituality. And although other approaches such as ethnographical and historical researches are important, a depth psychological study is relevant because it may connect the Shi'ite mind to a dimension beyond what culture produces. Other research methodologies do not necessarily address the lived numinous experiences of the participants *and* the pathological challenges that might occur due to the extreme ritualistic experiences.

My observations of young Shi'a Muslims who live in the United States, for instance, are that they have not understood the deeper meanings of the ritual. They interpret and experience the ritual profanely. Consequently, they have lost their religious curiosity and lean toward other religions such as Buddhism or other belief systems like standard atheism or material scientism. On the other hand, when coerced to act out the mourning and flagellating ritual due to family or community pressure, most people—in my experience of these phenomena—naturally face considerable psychological problems later in life, such as schizoid-affective states. This study can be of value to the future Shi'ite community in the West to understand the Ashura practice from a deeper psychological perspective.

Although the Ashura ritual as a whole can be considered to be an experience, its occurrence in the present age happens outside "The Karbala Paradigm" of the original cultural/historical/cosmological/theological context from which it derived its significance

and meaning. From my many observations of the ritual, experiences of Ashura appear to be occurring in modern youth who possess an increasing faith in the Western worldviews that express a different mentality and contain different philosophical associations, especially in the United States and Europe. Thus, I think a modern person's Ashura experience is changing from its original intentions because the ritual's symbolic meanings are getting mixed with that of the materialistic values and secular conditioning of the technological age.

In the Ashura ritual, the observances basically fall under three categories: 1) *marsia khani* (recitation of poetic elegies in rhyming quatrain), 2) *khutba* (sermons with philosophical and historical bent), and 3) *noha khani/mātam* (crafted elegiac lamentation, rhythmic beating, and self-flagellation).

A Deeper understanding of Islamic symbols and Shi'ite cosmology. The impact of a secular attitude toward Islam derived from the mainstream scientific disciplines leads to pathologizing an individual participating in the Ashura ritual. This is noticeably significant. This "scientific" view along with the repercussions of the attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11) in the United States and July 7, 2005 in London has led to a misrepresentation of Islam in Western society. Even educated Muslim families born in the United States have absorbed this misunderstanding of Islam, leaving it with a smeared reputation that needs to be carefully addressed by taking into account its symbolic and esoteric meanings of mourning, suffering, and martyrdom. The reason is that according to Jung (1929/1967a):

> Western consciousness is by no means the only kind of consciousness there is; it is historically conditioned and geographically limited, and

> representative of only one part of mankind. The widening of our consciousness ought not to proceed at the expense of other kinds of consciousness; it should come about through the development of those elements of our psyche which are analogous to those of the alien psyche, just as the East cannot do without our technology, science, and industry. The European invasion of the East was an act of violence on a grand scale, and it has left us with the duty—*noblesse oblige*—of understanding the mind of the East. This is perhaps more necessary than we realize at present. (p. 55)

Religious tolerance, which is the antidote to deep acts of violence in the name of religion, is another reason to study Shi'ite symbols. Different symbolic meanings should indeed be understood from their own cultural perspectives. They need depth psychological attention in the West and East because "those who use symbols as Jung understood them," contended Jungian scholar Susan Rowland, "are unlikely to be violent because symbolic understanding makes room for mystery, many meanings, doubt, and connections to the other" (personal communication, August 21, 2018). Westerners must not forget that their past ways of interpreting (or Hellenizing) the East mischaracterize its reality, understanding the East from the perspective of the Orient. When Westerners do this, they project their own shadows onto the other, pointing the finger by uttering such words as "the axis of evil."

On the one hand, there are the examples of immature Qur'anic exegesis used by the so-called mullahs in Middle Eastern regions inspiring young *mujahideen* (one who practice "*jihad*") for political purposes. On the other hand, the rising antipathy in the

West based on the portrayal of all Muslims as terrorists and evil is simply not based on facts, but on the opposing tension between democratic tolerance and religious intolerance. Indeed, as history has shown when these powerful political and religious teachings are combined in any religion, they can mold an entire culture in any part of the world and move it toward violence and unjust war—unconsciously instilling in the people an extremist's worldview.

In this investigation of Ashura symbols, I, as the first person, must be conscious of my personal transferences (unconscious bias as the second person) in interpreting the other (third person). Only then can I, from a middle position, operate as a phenomenologist and bracket my biases as much as possible toward my research, leaving the dogmatic/one-sided treatment of religion and secularism to the extremists.

Statement of the Research Problem and Methodology

There are two principal obstacles to doing this research. The first is how alchemical symbolism is interpreted by Jung, which has a Christian theological and cosmological background in contrast to the way alchemical symbolism is interpreted by Medieval Arab philosophers. Jung approached alchemy via a Gnostic-Hermetic tradition to explain his psychology. This concern is significant for Neo-Platonists or Perennial traditionalists, but for me, this procuring of psychic paths of knowing is simply dissolved when viewing them from an esoteric perspective or non-linear amplification. This is explained shortly, specifically in terms of Henry Corbin's work on the imaginal realm.

The second obstacle which is connected with the first and which I would like to focus on presently, is my epistemology. It is difficult as a researcher to integrate Shi'ism and Jungian psychology. How do I explain (*Erklären*) in Jungian terms how Shi'a

Muslims understand (*Verstehen*) their present-day Ashura experiences? On the one hand, these spiritual experiences, to me at least, are obviously caused by reimagining the original events of Karbala. This reimagining as a deliberate act of will on the part of the adept's work in the alchemical sense can be considered a consciously directed effort. However, this effort may be directed by the participant's unconscious psyche toward wholeness, giving the ritual its deeper meaning and purpose as well. Here lies the difficulty of interpretation for me.

How does a researcher validate the archetypal experiences of the "other," the ritual participants in this case, using Jung's alchemical model, which somehow shows the teleology of the psyche, individuation, which might differ from how the participants experience the ritual? I have two answers to this question. I anchor my first answer in the concept of *ta'wil*. *Ta'wil* simply means interpretation, but it is a term in Shi'ism that means to trace a thing back to its source, to its archetype. I am tracing the experiences of the participants back to their source while at the same time in the process, tracing my understanding of it. These two tracings are happening in my own psyche. I am the owner of both tracings, as it were; however, the experiences of the ritual rightly belong to the participant. I should deliver them with no tampering by me. I am simply to deliver them as I see them, as a phenomenon. They are to be studied and described without reducing their significance and meaning to how I see them.

But what I have just said is impossible. It is a goal that I will aim toward but cannot achieve. The contents of the participant's experiences will inevitably be mixed up with my psychic filtering. In the alchemical sense of hermeneutics, understanding is created through the mixing and separating of views. Patience, honesty, and trust in the

work were genuinely important for the Medieval alchemists. This virtue (*ihsan* or doing beautifully) is the reason the Prophet Muhammad was named *Al Amīn* (The trusted One). It is also the virtue I seek to embody. Moreover, the archetypal experiences of the participants are going through another living and breathing person, me, holding the same archetypes. This shared archetypal ground provides a meeting place where different horizons of experience can meet and become the pure gold of knowledge and understanding. Purification of the water (mind) was the aim or *telos* of the old alchemist/mystic.

Now of course I do not consider myself a prophet or a mystic, but by doing the philosophical work as Jung did, my second answer to how I validate my interpretation of the participant's psyche is *teleology*. Teleology is a term used in philosophy to mean seeing a phenomenon for its purpose and fulfillment rather than its cause. Teleology is an elemental approach of Jung's phenomenology and epistemology, or way of knowledge making (Papadopoulos, 2006). We should not think teleology as moving forward in time and space as galaxies going farther apart linearly from their original source to nonexistence. The source should rather be seen in the *ta'wil* cyclically in the phenomenal event itself as its hidden potential or intentionality. For example, just as a leaf or a fruit on a tree branch, though far from its root, carries its parental seed's potential, or its intention to become a tree, and remain a tree as a representative of that particular species of tree, similarly, a phenomenal event, such as a ritual experienced by a human, reveals what is behind its actuality, that is, its archetypal potential, its seed. Corbin (1980) explained this concept in the Shi'ite sense:

> The phenomenon is found in technical terms containing the Greek root *phany*: epiphany, theophany, hierophany, and so on. In Persia the phenomenon, *phainomenon*, is the *zāhir*, the apparent, the exterior, the exoteric. The thing that reveals itself while hiding itself in the *zāhir* is the *bātin*, the interior, the esoteric. . . . The *logos* of the phenomenon, the phenomenology, is therefore the hidden, the invisible thing beneath the visible. It allows the phenomenon to reveal itself as it does to the subject to whom it is revealing itself. (p. 3)

Corbin (1980) is saying that the *logos* means an archetypal *understanding* of the phenomenon. A researcher, as a phenomenologist, understands the *bātin* through the *zāhir*. Without the *zāhir,* no way can the *bātin* be intelligible. An event in the outer world "speaks," revealing its hidden or inner meaning, which carries the understanding (*logos*) of it from the outer to the inner structures of the soul (*tartīb al-mazāhir*) possible (Corbin, 1980). This is *ta'wil*, like the image of ouroboros, returning a phenomenal experience to its archetype. It is also *telos*, hidden in its purpose and meaning.

Depth psychologists see both Jung and Corbin as phenomenologists. As early as Jung's Zofingia lectures, observed Papadopoulos (2006), Jung distinguished teleology from that of Freud's reductive methods. Papadopoulos also noted that Jung used teleology "not only as a method of enquiry but also as a process 'external to man' . . . as a wider principle in life" (p. 29). This means that experiential meaning has the quality of objective processes—that is, unconscious processes that have little or nothing to do with the egoic aspect of the researcher. For example, Papadopoulos continued his review of Jung's methods and contended in his doctoral dissertation that "Jung again employed a

teleological approach to understand the spiritualistic phenomena he had observed. He felt that Helene's spiritualistic experiences had a teleological function in that they assisted her psychological development and maturity" (p. 29). To understand the spiritualistic phenomena of the mass gatherings of the Ashura ritual as expressing a deeper purpose like individuation, then, I also employ a teleological approach, which has been the approach for Muslim philosophers for centuries. These philosophers such as the authors of Ikhwān al-Safā (Brethren of Purity), Ibn Sina, Suhrawardī, Haydar Amuli, and Mullā Sadrā illustrated in their doctrine of the union of opposites, the goal (*telos*) of alchemy, which is soul's actualizing its spiritual potential, or her return to her origin (Nasr, 1987; Corbin, 2006).

In a broad sense, however, the tension in my epistemological concern is the method of this research. This was discussed earlier in terms of the transcended function and the tension of opposites because the tension makes room for refinement of knowledge, for an ongoing growing process, a fine-tuning of comparing and contrasting methods to see what emerges from the tension between Shi'ite philosophy and Jung's psychology. This method is important because it flows like a river. It is open to knowledge-making because it is a receptacle of perceiving and understanding.

But something is still missing from this method, which von Franz termed "religious eros" (as cited in Ibn Umail, 2006, p. 25), which I discuss more completely in Part 2 of this study in terms of the anima archetype representing the object of love in the Ashura ritual. At this juncture, any "understanding" of the psyche or soul without love is incomplete. Understanding is, to use alchemical terms, a *Chymical Wedding* or *hierosgamos*, which is concerned with the *coniunctio* operation of the individuation

process. In other words, love, what Jung (1963, 1946/1966c) called eternal union or objective cognition, is the glue that unites man with the divine. This love has little or nothing at all to do with the notions of sexuality postulated by Freud. For Shi'a devotees, this love is an effect of desire for reunion—caused by the guilt of separating from the beloved. Von Franz carried the alchemical work further than Jung, as if she were his mystical sister, the *soror mystica*:

> Like all religious movements, Islam was confronted with the problem of love and (influenced by Hermetism and Neoplatonism) it wavered between ascetic spirituality and attempts to include the physical love into the inner experience. Most Islamic mystics adhere however to the Platonic idea that the ultimate goal of love is the experience of the divine, in their context: of Allah. The Islamic alchemists had the same idea of love as the mystics, but in addition to the latter they worked on their own souls (*nafs*) through their alchemical opus. In that way the element of matter and the body was more included than with the purely spiritually oriented mystics. (as cited in Ibn Umail, 2006, p. 25)

Just like von Franz recognized by studying Arabic works that the Muslims preserved both the Hellenistic outer traditions and the mystical aspects of their own inner work, similarly, Shi'ite devotees in the Ashura ritual, too, have preserved a fine balance of understanding religious obligations without losing the dimension of religious eros; therefore, this dissertation calls not only for my conscious mind but also for my heart and my sensory organs (my eyes, my ears, my nose, and my mouth), all serving as receptive-containers of the body of knowledge for this work in recognition of both disciplines with

their differences and combinations. I embody this tension between Shi'ism and Jungian psychology in my own life, history, and persons—their differences and distinctions. Accordingly, my approach to this research is not only integral but also organic because "in reality," asserted Jung (1929/1967a):

> In such matters everything depends on the man and little or nothing on the method. For the method is merely the path, the direction taken by a man. The way he acts is the true expression of his nature. If it ceases to be this, then the method is nothing more than an affectation, something artificially added, rootless, and sapless, serving only the illegitimate goal of self-deception. (p. 7)

As a result, the work requires *logos* and *eros*. Without love, understanding is rootless and sapless. Without understanding, love is an unconscious Goddess, the archetypal projection which the monotheistic religions have repressed as the feminine aspect of matter for over 2,500 years.

Concerning the first obstacle to this research, I want to discuss more specifically the tension between Shi'ite philosophy and Jungian psychology. The problem is a difference of approach to spirituality, which in actuality, as I see it, is complementary to one another. This difference is between Jung's scientific epistemology of empiricism with his rejection of metaphysics and Shi'ite metaphysical interpretations of religious experiences. It is a matter of the direction of the vertical pole—that is to say, the direction which the psyche should face in seeking the spirit, its origin. Jung saw the spirit embedded in the psyche, in the depths below, trapped in matter. So, the direction to recovery spirit is downward. This is the top-down approach not only from the perspective

of Gnosticism but also because of Jung's Darwinian sympathies (i.e., the development of consciousness through evolution). Shi'ites, in contrast, view the spirit as originating from above. So, even though some academics have argued that Islam sees the individuation process from a top-down approach (see Williams, 2013), I believe the Shi'ite approach is down-up in the Platonic sense. They go to God through the Imams to the Prophet first, then follow the *Sunna*, which is the Prophetic model [exotericized] to reach the divine. The Prophet himself said, "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate" (Flaskerud, 2010, p. 203). This down-up direction when seen through the model of the mandala, however, shows that the spirit is not down or up. It is in *and* out. This coincides with Jung's view that the archetype of the Self is the center and the circumference of the circle. It is the whole thing, the ego included.

This difference of perspective and approach to spiritualization can therefore be harmonized when recognizing that, in Islamic gnosis, the goal of individuation is not two-dimensional upward or downward, but it is multidirectional. For a path to reach the center point of the circle, the points on the arc of the circumference all must be linked to the center.

Both approaches seek a way to the center of the soul, as illustrated by Jung's concept of the Self. Islam's approach to individuation is epistemological to ontological, and Islamic doctrines are rooted in knowing the Self. They are not in being the Self. Being (*baqā*) is the ultimate product of the experiential stage for Sufis, which comes after the experience of knowing the true Self via annihilating the false self (*fanā*). The *fanā* is the need to destroy all preoccupation with the ego which then allows the Sufi lover to

become extinguished in the true Self, the passionate "nothingness" of Divine love (Williams, 2013). I shall come back to this point.

I believe there is a complementarity between Jung's approach to psychic experience and the Shi'ite approach to metaphysical experience—though they remain distinct, as I shall discuss later. On the one hand, in Jung's empirical attitude all objective events are such because they are experienced by the subjective psyche, namely, the ego, whether they emerge from the archetypal or originate from the material world—in other words, the ego is never extinguished in the Self but remains a distinct personal center of awareness by means of which the individual maintains their relationship to the Self. On the other hand, in the imaginal attitude of Shi'ite traditionalists, the reality of events is not dependent on their being subjectively experienced. The existence of things is present whether human consciousness is there to perceive it. For instance, the color of an object does not depend on light for Shi'ite thinkers. The sixth Imam, Jaffar al-Sadiq, said that "light *manifests* color, not that which produces it and makes it *exist*" (Corbin, 2005, p. 55). Be that as it may, in Shi'ism, a consciousness to perceive God's creation always exists. Even in the human (*Anthropos*), things can be seen via non-sensory organs of visions or by the imaginal faculties that are rooted in the absolute. Consequently, the ego is only one of many ways of knowing the psyche—not to speak of other creatures of God. This means that in the Shi'ite approach, the ego, as Jung understood it, is not necessary to experience a spiritual phenomenon.

The ego is not the only carrier of consciousness from the Shi'ite perspective. The hidden master of mystical alchemy in the Middle Ages Muhammad Ibn Umail (d. 960 CE, known as "Senior" in the West) knew that the numinous is experienced in the

ritual of the work (*theurgy*) when the *materia* or ego-body (subtle body) is transformed into its original, the archetypal non-ego form (Ibn Umail, 2006; von Franz, 1980). In this experience, the ego is encountering the anima archetype. Strictly viewed from the Jungian perspective, this is the ego's experience of what existed before the conscious personality. But from a Shi'ite point of view, the archetypal experience is the experience of the archetype, that is to say, the archetype of the ego, and not the ego which is cut off from it. For a Shi'a thinker, thus, the ego as understood without the soul can never experience the archetype. Only when the archetype is revealed to consciousness, the experience of the soul takes place.

Chemically, only when the old, hard, or heavy-metal is killed by the chemical reactions applied to it, does the transformed new form come into being. The old becomes new by going through the stages of "suffering"—burning (fire), bathing or drowning (water), and so on. This new transmuted metal corresponds to a purified ego rising to a sublimated (*latifah,* or *sublimatio* in alchemy) awareness. *Latifah*, in Shi'ite theosophical schools, means an archetypal experience of the soul, where it is correlated to Jung's concept of "progressive assimilation" (the relationship between two archetypes or when a chthonic archetype takes on or adds to itself a more spiritual archetype, and vice versa) (See Jung, 1951/1968a, Chapter 14). Psychologically for Jung, this simply means that the ego also has to die in its old form for it to come into a relationship with the unconscious, and ultimately with the archetypal Self.

Another way to approach this research problem—of the distinction between the Jungian and Shi'ite perspectives—comes into focus when paying attention to Jung's biography and his double personality. After the publication of *The Red Book* (Jung,

2009), I learned that Jung's views on the inaccessibility of the archetype per se, not to mention the incomprehensibility of a metaphysical God, were based solely on his role as a psychiatrist and his efforts to support his views within the context of the empirical sciences, including psychotherapy. It is understood from his later work on alchemy, however, that he did not fully reject the gnostic premises of a direct archetypal experience. Even in his study of psychopathology, Jung saw the unconscious experiences of his patients as a spiritual phenomenon.

For this study, I consider that although the subject for Jung who does the experiencing is the ego, the "I" principle, the objective reality for the ego is the unconscious inner world *and* the physical outer world. Both worlds are real in their own essences, which Shi'a metaphysicians would agree with. The essences or absolute principles behind these worlds are relative only insofar as the state of ego-consciousness is involved, which for Jung is essential for experiencing and knowing.

From the perspective of Islamic gnosis, the notion of the unknowability of God is not false altogether, but it is only a half-truth. The *a priori* ontological reality or principle behind archetypes would be regarded by Muslims as God's knowledge of Himself and His creation known only to Him, in essence (*al-dhāt* or pronounced *al-zaat, ousia* in Greek). This essence, which is the divine center or Intellect in humans, can be translated to Jung's concept of the Self, which he borrowed from the East (Ribi, 2013), not to be confused with the collective unconscious. Jung (1928/1966d) explained:

> I have called this centre the *self*. Intellectually the self is no more than a psychological concept, a construct that serves to express an unknowable essence which we cannot grasp as such, since by definition it transcends

> our powers of comprehension. It might equally well be called the "God within us." (p. 238)

In Shi'ite/Sufi language, this Self is "superconsciousness" (*sirr*, *khafī*). No other consciousness can fully grasp God's infinite knowledge other than God (Corbin, 1954/1964, p. 99). Only God sees Himself fully. This is the concept of *tanzih* or God's transcendence or absoluteness in Shi'ite metaphysics, as it is also in the Sufism of Ibn al 'Arabi (Chittick, 1989; Corbin, 1958/1969). This Shi'ite introverted attitude is likely due to the Islamic metaphysical claim that metaphysics itself is not the product of the psyche, but rather it is the work of the overarching Intellect in which the psyche (*nafs*) is a part, a system. In comparison with the divine Intellect, the psyche is a denser substance, like a body. In fact, the psyche or soul is created by the Intellect or Spirit in Islamic philosophy, as if the psyche is a partial reality. The psyche takes part in a bigger consciousness, the Spirit—the spirit is not just a part of the psyche, along with other parts.

For Jung, this bigger consciousness can, in reality, be said to be the Self, which is often unconscious to the ego. But again, for Jung, the unconscious is not really "unconscious," but it is unconscious only to the tiny subjective ego, the central complex in the field of consciousness. In other words, the unconscious is an ontological reality much bigger than the egoic subjectivity or awareness. For Jung, as we have already noted above, that the Self is the "objective psyche" in relation to the subjective "I" principle, the ego. But it has its own center and absolute knowledge in the Self. The objective psyche is only unknown epistemologically to the ego. The subject, or ego, is important for individuation because it is through the ego that the Self becomes epistemologically

available—by the ego becoming conscious of the objective psyche. Jung (1943/1969i) describes the ego's relationship with the Self saying:

> In childhood it awakens gradually, and all through life it wakes each morning out of the depths of sleep from an unconscious condition. It is like a child that is born daily out of the primordial womb of the unconscious. In fact, closer investigation reveals that it is not only influenced by the unconscious but continually emerges out of it in the form of numberless spontaneous ideas and sudden flashes of thought. (p. 570)

In the similar way, the subjective psyche, the ego-consciousness of human beings, in Shi'ism is not purely separated. It is always anchored in God's knowledge and His intelligences or angels (Corbin, 1954/1964). That is, psychologically it is always mixed with the light of the unconscious's consciousness, such as archetypal consciousness, via Platonic forms. In Islamic metaphysics, this concept is called *tashbih*, or God's inseparability, similarity, or closeness to human beings. Human ego-consciousness can know anything because it is forever held by the All-Knower, no matter how distant one is from its *ta'wil*.

In this sense, what I mean by the term "metaphysical" denotes knowledge beyond reach, *but* at the same time, it is reachable because it can be revealed to human imagination by means of doing the work, just as the archetypal unconscious in Jung's psychology, is both a reality transcendent/unknown *and* at the same time, something that can reach human consciousness. Like the yin/yang of the East, then, *tanzih/tashbih* are

the two Islamic versions of the complementary and compensatory universal principles corresponding to Jung's theory of the opposites and archetypal spectrum (see Figure 2).

This study adopts this image of Absolute/relative throughout this research as an approach and a contained ontology.

The Imaginal: An Approach and a Realm

In this study, the imaginal is to be regarded in two ways: (a) as an *epistemological approach* and (b) as an *ontological realm*. An epistemological approach is a subjective way of knowing the other. It is a conscious effort to know the Self and its activities as one's own polar opposite (*tashbih*). An ontological realm is an objective reality within the psyche, or rather, the reality of soul itself. It is the absolute sense of being within the awareness of a transcendent other (*tanzih*). Therefore, the imaginal *is* the psychic that sees and knows itself as the other.

In the Sufi Shi'ite sense, the imaginal is the cognitive vision, *tassawur*—the multiplicity of ways (*tariqa*, the radii) of tasting the Real (*haqīqa*, *asl*, the essence of being). I provide a brief outline of the cyclical or circumambulatory nature of the imaginal in both Jung's psychology and Islamic philosophy that leads to alchemical expressions.

In Shi'ite cosmology, God as the Absolute principle can be known objectively within the person's subjectivity—that is, experientially, because God is paradoxically immanent (*tashbih*) in the world and at the same time, transcendent (*tanzih*). The knowing of His presence is *tashbih*. But the transcendent God exceeds human knowledge; hence, the presence of the divine within the human awareness is undifferentiated, like an unmoved or static potential in matter, waiting to be potentiated.

Similarly, for Jung, the Self as the Absolute principle cannot be understood by human consciousness. This archetype stands outside the human purview. Jung called it the pleroma, out of which emerged the creatura (Segal, 1992). This pleroma is not only an image of the transcendent factor of the psyche but also a realm of God for Jung, the unconscious as containing "Absolute Knowledge" in the psychoid (Jung, 1952/1969b, p. 493; Segal, 1992). Further, the immanent divine for Jung would be the archetypal forces from the pleromic realm entering the collective unconscious of the creature, the Absolute entering the relative or in Shi'ite imagination *tanzih* entering the *tashbih* realm. This is why, for Jung, consciousness must be dimmed or lowered to experience the forces of the collective unconscious. This is what the technique of active imagination accomplishes.

Active imagination (*hadrat al-khayāl*), in the Shi'ite sense, is a bridge, an epiphanic approach, and a crossing from *tashbih* to *tanzih*. It is a hermeneutical approach (*ta'wil*, *ta'bīr*) of understanding "which transmutes sensory data and rational concepts into symbols (*mazāhir*) by making them effect this crossing" (Corbin, 1969, p. 189).

This act for Shi'a devotees would be similar to what happens when they set aside their daily thoughts and enter the ritual to reimagine the Karbala narrative. The devotees lose their sense of ego to the archetypal power of the ritual that promotes individuation. A person's own unconscious fantasy images are brought up to consciousness.

The difference between Shi'ism and Jung's insistence on archetypal inaccessibility seems to be that these archetypal realities do not lose their metaphysical reality in Islam just because they have been touched by the light of human or any other consciousness in the creatura. Now the problem is that for Jung, this fundamentally cannot be proven empirically by science because metaphysical realities are beyond the

phenomenal world of human experience. Here the problem is not ontological, it is epistemological.

At this point, the question is: What does "archetypal experience" mean in depth psychology? Is it the ego experiencing effects produced by the archetypes, or is it that the archetypes experience through "our" consciousness? If the former is true, then archetypes produce patterns, but they themselves do not change. The archetype of the Mother, Father, or Anima/Animus is just what it is, set by its specific laws of the nature of the motherliness, fatherliness, and so on, whether positively or negatively. If the second question is true, then archetypes would certainly change. Jungians are unsettled on this matter—in keeping with Jung's own reticence to make a final pronouncement on metaphysical questions. The question of why the archetypes would change or remain unchanged is an underlying thread in this research, which looks at the Shi'ite religious experiences as symbolic—that is, from both perspectives of conscious experience and archetypal reality.

Regardless of the bi-directional approach of my research, whether experience of an event meets people from "below" in the unconscious or from "above" in the divine, I am suggesting that the imaginal for this study may provide a solution to how the psyche can experience anything objective from any direction. The imaginal faculty for both depth psychology and Shi'ite philosophy is the instrument or medium by which knowledge is carried to consciousness. Moreover, whatever comes into the experiential realm as knowledge, whether by the psychoid or the divine Intellect, must go through imagination. As a result, the problem of interpreting religious experience as numinous according to the different worldviews of Shi'ism and Jungian psychology are dissolved in

this study by viewing the psychic states of the Ashura experience as occurring in the imaginal realm (*alam al-mithal*). Consequently, these psychic states can be understood, however differently, by both Shi'ism and depth psychology because both embrace the imagination as a valid source of knowledge. As far as my hermetic philosophy and the approach to the imaginal is concerned, I therefore think both Jungian and Islamic methods about the nature of interpretation and/or inquiry are rooted in their ontological presuppositions and are complementarily valid for understanding religious phenomena.

Research Questions

In keeping with the bi-directionality I have been discussing in the views of depth psychology and Shi'ism, the research questions for this dissertation move in two directions as well.

1) How might a depth psychological approach to the mourning ritual of Ashura provide a deeper understanding of its symbols?
2) How might Shi'ite cosmology, which is the holistic context within which the Ashura's ceremonial stages take place and are understood, further inform the field of depth psychology with a broader metaphysical context for understanding the archetypal realities that are considered the basis of numinous experience and psychological transformation?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Three main domains comprise the literature review. The first includes literature relevant to the Ashura ritual and Shi'ite cosmology. In this section, I looked at texts written on Ashura's origin and its historical development, which for clarity requires two sub-sections: (a) historical texts from the traditional point of view and (b) contemporary works of modern scholars. The second domain of literature includes Henry Corbin's specific work on imagination and Imamology, which pertains to the topic and my theoretical approach. The third domain comprises the literature from depth psychology, especially the relevant material of Jung and Jungians on the subject of symbols, suffering, alchemy, and religion.

The Ashura Ritual and Shi'ite Cosmology

Traditional historical texts. Collected works of Shi'ite tradition historically illuminate Ashura's origin. One such relevant text is *Behār al-Anwār* (*Oceans of Lights*), a monumental encyclopedia of Shi'ite *hadiths*. It is a standard reference for all Shi'ite Studies according to Chittick (1980), containing 110 volumes of 400 pages each, compiled by Mohammad-Baqir Al-Majlisi (2014) and published at the very end of the 17th century. I looked at volumes 44 and 45. These two volumes detail the tragedy of Karbala historically and hagiographically leading to the martyrdom of Imam Hussain and the aftermath. Al-Majlisi's work provides an intensive imaginal account of Hussain's suffering and also gives reported accounts of how his family was affected. It initiates a reader, especially a researcher, towards seeing the Shi'ite way of psychic incubation. With careful consideration, I drew some narratives from this text to offer my readers a

heart-wrenching sense of the sufferings of the Karbala martyrs. These descriptions take the Shi'a imagination to an unbearable place, to a place where the martyrs were disgraced by the indecency of those who claimed to be the so-called upholders of the teachings of Islam. The narrations in these volumes (Al-Majlisi, 2014) are sorrowfully poetic. They tell us something about the nature of evil. The reader's psyche moves toward an archetypal encounter with darkness (*nigredo*) yet via empathic pathways of the author, Al-Majlisi. The heart breaks, the body trembles, time slows down, and tears flow. For this research, these narratives serve as the *prima materia* carrying the suffering evoked on the Day of Ashura and its ritual reenactment.

The approach to these narratives was like a patient's story that an analyst must hear from the beginning—providing as much as time and space as necessary to the recollection. With these tragic stories that became the personal psychic "stuff" of the Shi'a devotees during the ritual, the researcher was able to put together deeper connections to how these psychic materials with their raw emotions are worked on through the alchemical operations in the Ashura mourning ceremonies.

To understand the Ashura ritual of Muharram, *belief* (presumed ontology) in Shi'ite Imams must be included. Tabatabai's (2002) book *Shi'a* guided the present work ethically. Tabatabai was also one of Corbin's teachers, and Nasr has written about Tabatabai: "Only during the past few years has a new class of scholars come into being which is both traditional and at the same time knows well the modern language necessary to reach the intelligent Western reader" (Tabatabai, 2002, p. 19).

Shi'a is a substantive source that describes difficult terminologies in clear language, providing many insights into Shi'ite methods. For example, the word *ta'wil*,

which is one of the methods of this research, is explained from the Shi'ite and Sunni perspectives. From Sunni, *ta'wil* usually means that which opposes the outward or literal meanings of the Qur'anic verses. The Shi'ite point of view is quite different. According to Tabatabai (2002):

> The whole of the Qur'an possesses the sense of *ta'wil*, of esoteric meaning, which cannot be comprehended directly through human thought alone. Only the prophets and the pure among the saints of God who are free from the dross of human imperfection can contemplate these meanings while living on the present plane of existence. On the Day of Resurrection, the ta'wil of the Qur'an will be revealed to everyone. (p. 99)

Tabatabai's (2002) text described the Shi'ite belief system from the esoteric point of view, which differs from just saying "inner perspective." The Shi'ite way comprises a deeper layer of understanding than an intuitive awareness. Although this work does not directly explain the depth psychological dynamics underlying religious practices such as the passion play of Karbala during Muharram as projections of the psyche, in the Jungian sense, it certainly provides the philosophical and mythological frame of Shi'ism and its history. It offers content that can then be studied with depth psychological analysis.

Another key text I reviewed is by Nasr (1993) with a title that speaks to its contents, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*. Nasr is a modern scholar, but his formulations in this text described the classical views of Ibn-Sina and Ikhwān al-Safā of the 10th–11th centuries. These figures created a philosophical and

cosmological framework within which the Islamic world experienced a psychological shift in perspective. This shift was also briefly discussed by Cheetham (2015) in his book *Imaginal Love*: *The Meanings of Imagination in Henry Corbin and James Hillman*. It was important to see how or if the early Islamic philosophy affected Ashura rites in comparison with the modern technological shift. Cheetham also offered a better understanding of the Shi'ite/Sunni bifurcation from a historical perspective. For the present study, however, the split within Islam is relevant only from the psychological interpretation—that is, within the purview of the unconscious.

Another text I reviewed is *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* by S. H. M. Jafri (1979). This text describes the rise and development of Islam until the Prophet's companions began questioning the succession of Ali. Jafri offered a view of the struggle of Shi'ite Imams for their doctrinal legitimacy, especially the sixth Imam, Jaffar al-Sadiq (a.s).

A small book by Chittick (1980), *A Shi'ite Anthology,* is a translation of sermons, sayings, prayers, and writings of Imams, which in a sense shows the imaginative scope of the early Shi'ite metaphysical principles. According to Chittick, these writings refute the idea in the West that the early mentality of Arabs reflected a simple Bedouin faith-based system "with few philosophical or metaphysical overtones" (p. 17). These writings such as Ali's letters and the prayers of other Imams are important for the present study because they show not only the political teachings but also their moral meanings.

The main historical source heavily relied upon is *The History of Al-Tabarī* by Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarīr Al-Tabarī's (d. 923), written in 39 volumes. Al-Tabarī

is “generally acknowledged throughout the Muslim world as the most prestigious and authoritative early Islamic historian” (Hazleton, 2009, p. 203). Hazelton’s well-researched book, *After the Prophet: The Epic Story of the Shia-Sunni Split*, provided additional depth on Al-Tabarī:

> Al-Tabarī combined these oral accounts with earlier written histories, fully acknowledging his debt at every step. He did this so faithfully and skillfully that his own work soon superseded some of his written sources, which were no longer copied or saved. His detailed account of what happened at Karbala in the year 680, for instance, is based on *Kitab Maqtal al-Hussein* (*The Book of the Murder of Hussein*), written by the Kufan Abu Mikhnaf just fifty years after Karbala from firsthand eyewitness accounts, including that of Hussein’s one surviving son. (p. 220)

Reviewing the entire corpus of Al-Tabarī was out of the question, for each volume contains hundreds of pages. As a result, I explored only key volumes pertaining to the topic at hand.

Contemporary texts on Shi’ism. A move from the traditional literature to contemporary does not necessarily mean a loss of the religious aspect within the literature. One example is a text by Ayoub (1978) called *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of Ashura in Twelver Shi’ism*. This text required slow, close study because in it are early accounts and interpretations of Hussain’s martyrdom. This work presented many important esoteric insights into the Shi’a mind through examples of Persian (Iranian) ceremonial rituals, the piety in mourning in *majlis* or

gathering, in *marāthi* (poetic elegies and other elements or enchantments that call for weeping, incantations), in *zīyarah* (theatrical re-enactment of the Karbala events and strong expressions of lamentations designed for the subsequent stages), and in *mātam* (chest and head beating/cutting).

In this literature, a depth psychologist can see through the outward descriptions to discover many symbolic meanings. For instance, we can see *mātam* as the *mortificatio* (mortification) process of alchemy. Further, Ayoub (1978) cited the sixth Imam who applied the concept of *nigredo* from an alchemical point of view. Explaining the aftermath of Hussain's martyrdom and his 30 dead companions who lay on the hot desert ground of Karbala, the Imam avowed:

> God in His wisdom created light on Friday, the first of Ramadān, and darkness on Wednesday, the Day of Ashura. Ashura is a day of darkness and disorder in the universe. On it, darkness, the symbol of evil and chaos, was created; on it, after the death of Husayn, the laws of nature were suspended as the sun darkened in mid-day, the stars collided with one another, and the heavens were troubled. (p. 150)

Here is the gnostic idea of light and dark, and the nature of "Yazid consciousness" (*Yazidiāt*). It is in the Shi'ite worldview an immoral and evil side of humanity.

The question of good and evil ultimately pertains to suffering in the Shi'ite mentality, and it differs from that of Sunni orthodoxy. On this matter, many relevant articles were compiled in a book under the heading *International Journal of Shi'i Studies* (L. Clarke, Ed., 2003, Vol. 1). I reviewed three articles from the journal. First was "The Problem of Suffering in Islam" (Ayoub, 2003), a broad sweep of the question

of the origin of evil. The second, "Brief Remarks on Relations between Tashayyu' and Christianity" (Damad, 2003), was a discussion of Jesus and the Qur'an as the "word of God." In Shi'ism, both are connected with the Imams, similar to the Christian idea of the *logos* eternally existing with God. This is important to this work because it connects to a soteriological view common in the West, which might have an influence on modern Shi'as. Damad's article is worth reviewing in comparison with Jung's *Answer to Job* (1952/1969a) and with the Shi'ite concept of *walayat* in mind. The last article deals with the Shi'ite concept. It is titled, "The Soteriology of Wilaya: Early Tashayyu' and Mulla Sadra" (Rizvi, 2003). *Walayat* expresses the underlying, archetypal basis of "spiritual authority" embodied in both the Christian *logos* in Christ and the Shi'ite Imam. It is not accidental that both Shi'ites and certain sects of Christianity reenact their respective symbolic passion plays in self-flagellation and catharsis in a ritual form. Cosmologically in Shi'ism, it has been said more than once that the realities of Imam and Christ are both related in terms of their salvific function.

Ashura's ritual performances that include *ta'ziyah*, are a reenacting of the death of Imam Hussain and his family's sufferings in a procession form. They have developed cross-culturally in different milieus. These ritual performances have not only taken on the unique characteristics of the cultures they are in, but they have also transformed their inner symbolic meaning under the mixing of Eastern and Western values and perspectives. A very relevant scholarly work that focused on this—phenomenon of the inner and outer transformation of the Ashura ritual from Iran to the modern West—is by Korom (2003): *Hosay Trinidad: Muharram Performances in an Indo-Caribbean Diaspora.* From an ethnographical perspective, this text is not

insignificant because it describes the "transnational cultural production"; thus, in a sense, Korom theorized the psychological coloring that may simply be because of geographical orientation and adaptation.

For me, it was essential to cover summaries of the events surrounding Hussain's martyrdom. Al-Jibouri (1999) outlined these accounts in *Kerbala and Beyond*. This book was a significant read. It details many aspects of the tragedy. For instance, Al-Jibouri first traced Hussain's journey from "Medina to Karbala, where he was martyred, then his severed head journeyed to Syria followed by its return, accompanied by the widows and orphans to Karbala, where Hussain's head was reunited with its body" (p. 120). Al-Jibouri provided a historical account of "Imam Hussain's revolution" relevant to the present study not so much for its political impact that changed the face of Ashura, but its psychological impact, which perhaps divided the Muslims even further because of their metaphysical differences.

Another short yet very good work that contributed a brief history and symbolic background of Shi'ism is Aghaie's (2004) *The Martyrs of Karbala: Shi'i Symbols and Rituals in Modern Iran*. This text focused on the Qajar (1796–1925) period and the Pahlavi period (1925–1979). Although Aghaie did not provide any information that could be analyzed for depth psychological insight, it furnished my research with consideration in organizing data and ethical guidelines. I looked at some other edited articles by Aghaie that focused on the gender dynamics of the ritual.

History of the Arabs by Hitti (2002), a Lebanese American scholar at Princeton and Harvard universities, constituted an outstanding text of over 700 pages that offered this study a basis for understanding the historical movement from the early Bedouin

life of Arabs to the scientific and literary progress of the Muslim world from a Western academic perspective. What I gained in this historical text was an understanding of the mixing of cultures as Islam spread into the Christian and Persian worlds. Although Shi'ism found a foothold in Persia-Iran and India, Hitti explained, Shi'a Muslims in the past were persecuted in Baghdad and Damascus in earlier periods when Iran was a seat of Sunni theology. This geographical shift of Shi'ism was important as a reminder to see Shi'ism and its rituals before and after the shift to Iranian culture and ethos. As a result, the world relations with the Shi'ite dynasties such as the Fatimid (909–1171 CE) and Safavid (1501–1736 CE) were important for this research. The significance is that these relations and/or negotiations led me to a deeper insight into how the European Christian and Persian religious mindsets influenced or confluenced the Shi'ite psyche.

Henry Corbin

Henry Corbin (d. 1978) was a key author who connects the prophetic science of Shi'ism with Jung's psychology. Corbin differed with Jung in many ways (Cheetham, 2012). But the road they both traveled together started and ended with the idea of prophecy (Kingsley, 2018).

The *image* in Jung's thought is central to understanding his psychology. In Corbin's study of the Shi'ite perspective of the image-making psyche, the world of imagination is central to knowing the angelic world and *walayah*.

Corbin was important to this research primarily because true imagination (*imaginatio vera*) in the Shi'ite sense is a process that unites the human with [his or

her] sacredness. Many of Corbin's major books and translated works elaborated this concept throughout this dissertation.

I interpreted the images seen in the ritual and the images described in Shi'ite texts with my own imaginative powers. Because "the imaginative function," observed Corbin (1972), "makes it possible for all the universes to symbolize with each other and, by way of experiment, it enables us to imagine that each substantial reality assumes forms that correspond to each respective universe" (p. 9). Imagination provided the foundation of this dissertation as a method of making archetypal knowledge in this world as opposed to rational inquiry alone. For me, the rational thought came in after the creative process of this research was done.

Along with Jung's technique of active imagination, and Corbin's *imaginal*, I turned to the rational function—combined with an imaginal perspective—on how the soul of this work moves through time and beyond time, as it does in the ritual. This, to stress once more, is metaphysical and archetypal because the movement of the soul is from relativized time and space of the corporeal into the imaginal, and then into an eternal or universal world of *walayah*. This is the movement at work in the ritual drama of Ashura.

In terms of Jung's notion of the individuation process symbolized in alchemy, Corbin's unique interpretation is important to understand the Shi'ite notion of the archetypes of Fatimah and the Hidden Imam and their roles in this work.

Stated briefly, we should understand a subtle difference between Corbin and Jung, for instance, "over the idea of the Shadow" (Cheetham, 2012, p. 132). Basically, from an *Ishrāqī* point of view (Suhrawardi's school of thought adopted by Corbin), knowledge

means light and *not* darkness. Having knowledge of anything, including black (or that which was once light and now dark) is still light. In other words, light, by knowing its opposite, which is darkness, does not transmute itself to the latter, or change its suchness into the object of its knowledge; rather, it gains more light (illuminating darkness in the process). In this sense, the Shi'ite experience of integration differs from Jung's psychology in which the Shadow is never fully transmuted into the light of knowledge.

In Shi'ism, one does not integrate evil as such in this process. So, for Corbin, there is a paradoxical notion of immutable change here. That is, when Corbin sees consciousness as Suhrawardi's light,[11] he does not change its essential being, its ontology, no matter how much of the unconscious evil contents are added to it. Consciousness, for Corbin, only increases or decreases in its intensity on the basis of its epistemology.

In the Jungian world, the ego realizes the Self by also integrating darkness (including evil or shadow aspects) in order for any authentic understanding to take place. The ego must become conscious of the unconscious aspects, but the unconscious is never fully assimilated or absorbed by the ego. For Jung and Jungians, consciousness is "based on unconscious, i.e., on transcendental processes" (Cheetham, 2012).

This transcendental background is also true for Corbin if individuation is seen from an archetypal perspective (not in the sense of collective experience, but something that happens beyond the phenomenal). For Corbin, the transcendental process happens outside the human processes. This outside is epistemologically inside, turned inside out, facing the Angelic world. For both Corbin and Jung, this experience of projection

[11] See Suhrawardī (1999).

happens alone with the inner figures of the Self, one's own prophet or genius. Human consciousness is able only to *interpret* the transcendental processes as symbolic phenomenon. It does not become like the metaphysical reality it symbolically experiences. The archetypal personality stands alone in the one, beyond phenomenal reality, in the divine One, fully whole or individuated.

The phenomenal realities of light and darkness, good and evil, in Shi'ism, are categories of the One. This bi-unity or double aspect is linked with, and in the end *is*, also manifest in the noumenal (prophecy or *nabuwwah*) and its transcendental (*walayah*) reality. All categories (not to be confused with Kantian categories) are a continuous reality of the One, descending only in degrees of light, from the Absolute to the darkness of the corporeal realm.

In this dissertation, because Corbin's work comprised a bridge that links Jung and the Occident on the one side, and the Persian-Iranian on the other, his texts were closely examined especially, as they describe Shi'ite symbols, to gain psychological and metaphysical insights.

Depth Psychology

Although depth psychology has paid little attention to Islam and its rituals, Jung's concept of individuation by way of the symbolic expressions of archetypes constituted the foundation of this research in helping to unite the Ashura stages of suffering with those of the stages of alchemy. Consequently, Jung's overall work especially on alchemy was the primary source of this research in a broad sense.

Because the literature specific to understanding symbols spanned throughout Jung's *Collected Works*, the review started where Jung (1921/1971) first defined the term

symbol and then move into part two of *Symbols of Transformation* (Jung, 1952/1967e). This literature is important because, in it, Jung unpacked his ideas of the process of individuation and symbolism. Four chapters essential to the review are: "Transformation of Libido," "The Origin of the Hero," "Symbols of the Mother and Rebirth," and "The Sacrifice." Most helpful in these chapters was Jung's basic use of religious and mythic stories that he interpreted symbolically as psychic processes leading to personality development. The same or a similar method was applied to the efforts in this study for understanding the stories of Ashura and incorporating Jung's psychological interpretation of religious symbols.

Jung's (1954/1976) next volume reviewed was *The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings* (Vol. 18). According to Hopcke (1999), this volume provided a tangible sense of how Jung understood and used a symbolic approach to psychic life and development as they apply to the individuation process (p. 31). Jung's (1954/1976) understanding of symbolic exposition can be entered in a holistic sense because he interpreted the mandala symbol, which is important for engaging with Islamic cosmology. Many medieval Muslim philosophers often used mandala symbols to explain the Islamic cosmic hierarchy—for example, in "the chain of being" described by Ikhwān al-Safā (See Nasr, 1993, p. 71).

Jung's *Answer to Job* (1952/1969a) was reviewed because that essay offered a gateway to enter the psychology of suffering and good and evil as Jung saw it. Comparing the trials of Job drew possible parallels to Hussain's personal sacrifice and martyrdom, not in any way by psychoanalyzing Imam Hussain, but by situating his earthly life in a larger meaningful context.

The heart of this work required a review of Jung's later literature on alchemical symbolism drawing from *Psychology and Alchemy* (1953/1968d), *Alchemical Studies* (1958/2014), and *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (1955–1956/1970a). I read them to gain a rich terminology of the psychic death/rebirth processes that provided an alchemical language for interpreting symbols of Ashura. Jung's psychological interpretation of alchemical operations analogized the stages of the Ashura ritual.

Mysterium Coniunctionis (Jung, 1955–1956/1970a), however, was perhaps the most difficult to understand; therefore, *The Mysterium Lectures* by Edward F. Edinger (1995), a Jungian analyst and well-known interpreter of Jung's work, was consulted for assistance and enlightenment. As a secondary source, these lectures provided an understanding of alchemical symbolism from a psychological point of view because Edinger's copious study of Jung's difficult ideas helps illustrate them. The *Mysterium Lectures*, as Joan Dexter Blackmer noted in the Foreword, "prove to be a useful guide to that great city of the psyche that is Jung's *Mysterium Coniunctionis*" (p. 15).

All of Jung's alchemical writings cannot possibly be included in this literature review, for it would take a project beyond the present one. This reality required only being faithful to the parallel operations relevant to the Ashura ritual by amplifying the symbols with alchemical processes. To accomplish that task, I reviewed Burckhardt's (1967) *Alchemy* vis-à-vis Edinger's (1994a) *Anatomy of the Psyche: Alchemical Symbolism in Psychotherapy*. Both are important for many reasons because, among other things, they allowed a connection to the inner psychological functions with outer behavior. How Jung found in alchemy texts the (astrological) projected patterns of the

unconscious also revealed stages of Ashura coinciding with the alchemy stages described in Burkhardt's and Edinger's books.

Understanding alchemy from a Jungian sense would be incomplete without reviewing literature by Marie-Louise von Franz (d. 1998). She was important for this work because she not only wrote many notable books on various topics in depth psychology, she also translated some major alchemical manuscripts for Jung, such as *Aurora Consurgens* and *Musaeum Hermeticum,* and had to learn Arabic due to the fact that many of the passages were written by Muslim alchemists.

This research builds on a review of five books written by von Franz: (a) *Aurora Consurgens: A Document Attributed to Thomas Aquinas on the Problem of Opposites in Alchemy* (2000). This work was read side by side with (b) her psychological commentary on *Corpus Alchemicum Arabicum: A Book of the Explanation of the Symbols* (*Kitāb Hall ar-Rumūz* by Muhammad ibn Umail (2006); (c) her lectures compiled in a text called *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology* (von Franz, 1980), which helped me to understand symbols from a depth psychological perspective; (d) her work called *Alchemical Active Imagination* (1997), which helped me explore particularly the origins of alchemy and also the divine power in matter; and (e) *Psyche and Matter* (1992), an excellent contribution to the discussion of time, which connects with Corbin's work. I also looked briefly at von Franz's (1980b)—*Projection and re-collection in Jungian psychology: Reflections of the soul*—regarding the notion of projection.

To draw modern and strictly empirical perspectives from the alchemical literature based on depth psychology, I also gained insights from the contemporary scholarship of Stanton Marlan and Lionel Corbett. A collection of essays by eight authors, Marlan's

(1997) book *Fire in the Stone: The Alchemy of Desire* has been praised by many prominent Jungians such as Joseph Henderson, Andrew Samuels, John Beebe, June Singer, and Robert Bosnak. This book offered me a perspective of analysis and/or therapy. Some authors, for instance, analyzed their patients' unconscious contents by using alchemical designations—that is to say, by observing the history of a patient's psychological (archetypal) experiences, the psychotherapists uncover meanings for their patients, outlining psyche's self-care system. For example, Donald E. Kalsched (1997) in his chapter on self-care in early trauma observed:

> In the unconscious of these patients, we find a figure who personifies these dissociative activities, and Hermes-Mercurius is an apt designation for such defensive processes. We usually think of Mercurius as an agent of mediation and integration, as well as the union of opposites. But in the unconscious material of patients suffering early trauma, we find an intrapsychic Mercurial factor which actually tries to split the opposites and annihilate integrative connections. (p. 95)

Through Marlan's (1997) work, the conditions analyzed were those that are expressed in the participants of the Ashura ritual, especially of self-flagellation. This revealed its diabolic face, that is to say, it shows how suffering, what Kalsched (1997) called "the shadow problem" (p. 96), played a role within the self-regulatory system of the individuation process, especially the *nigredo* stage.

Some if not all the essays in Marlan's (1997) book suggested that "the individuation process," as proposed by Jung, does not fit every person's self-care typology, and it probably and possibly would not fit every cultural path to spirituality in a

religious sense. As a result, Marlan's book provided a critical lens for a different perspective on individuation, which opened the door for the "psychopathology of individuation" (Jung, 1951/1968a, p. 172), particularly from the Shi'ite perspective.

Suffering and how it affects the individuation process is important for the conclusion of this study; therefore, a key work for review was Lionel Corbett's (2015) *The Soul in Anguish: Psychotherapeutic Approaches to Suffering*. This book was sympathetic to the approach of Jungian analysis, but Corbett described a variety of approaches, including cultural, to work with suffering patients in a positive sense. The most valuable implication of Corbett's work was that it offered an archetypal understanding of suffering within the individual and culture.

The Need for Research on the Topic

Much of the earlier interest in Shi'ism, before the 1979 revolution of Iran, was from the European colonialists who linked their research with the Sunni populace. And after 9/11, Islam was smeared as an anti-West threat. Although a few studies investigated the psychological reality of suffering in Islam, none addressed its deeper spiritual aspects. This research not only provides depth psychology an understanding of Shi'ism, but it may also give modern Shi'a Muslims a way of understanding the psychology behind the Ashura ritual, authentically reconnecting them to the imaginal and metaphysical depths of their own tradition.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology and Procedures

Research Approach

My philosophical stance regarding knowledge and reality is Islamic in the sense that it roots its doctrines in *gnosis*. I see that epistemology, or the way of knowing, is gained mainly in three ways: (a) through empirical evidence or rational inquiry (*'aqli*), which many Muslim philosophers would regard as human knowledge; (b) through intuitive/imaginative knowing, which has a traditional participatory spark of divine knowledge (*naqli*); and (c) through revelatory experience where no human knowledge is involved; it is strictly visionary knowledge. With revelatory experience, human participation plays only as a receiver of the knowledge, with no effort or will of the ego-consciousness. It is called *kashf* in Sufism and Shi'ism, which means unveiling.

This unveiling happens to those who have gone through the rational and traditional pathways, and therefore already prepared their consciousness that requires a perfect aptitude to gain nearness to a primordial region of the psyche—where they first meet with the Friends of God, and then, unite in the "community" of their unveiled, invisible principle. Each categorical achievement toward hidden knowledge is a step forward to an esoteric level from a lower exoteric level. That is, from the point of (a), (c) is esoteric to the esoteric (b).

Although many critics of Jung have appeared in Islamic circles because of his inverted model of the psyche—that is, as discussed earlier, the numinous experience arising from below rather than above—they failed to see that Jung often spoke from this exterior to interior polarity, and not psychologism. They failed to see complementary

elements in Jung's perspective, which can be interpreted in compatible ways with Shi'ite views.

Therefore, compared to the Shi'ite cosmological (geocentric) scheme, the trajectory of the soul's return is reoriented as moving in steps not from the down upward, but from above downward (see Figure 3).

Shi'as, too, approach God's knowledge within human knowledge through purification of the heart. So, both views can be understood by superimposing the orientation in the light of a ritualistic or ceremonial magic circle (mandala), that is, moving from out inwards, from the rim to the hub, or from the ego-consciousness level to the unconscious levels for the purpose of knowing the Self—represented by the center point as its archetype. For the divine spark, according to both views, is embedded within; hence, people go into the body, the *prima materia* of the alchemist. That is where the gold hides. In this inner path *(tariqa*, *sīrāt*), the center of a circle is not to be signified as the ego. The ego starts on the circumference which symbolizes an inflated position. Here, the ego is an image; the sun reflected on many surfaces. By going through the steps, the ego is transported or transmuted from one state to another.

But there seems to be a paradox or a sense of confusion here. If the ego is being transported to a more hidden or spiritual place, how is it that it is being less hidden and made more perfect? The answer to this is in the esoteric or hermetic understanding (*ta'wil*) of 'know thyself and hence know thy Lord'. Each step of 'knowing thyself' is an epistemological metamorphosis, and simultaneously a step in knowing the Lord.

For Jung (1928/1966d), the ego and the unconscious "complement one another to form a totality, which is the *self*" (p. 177). The notion of the Self is a concept

supraordinate to the ego, “a construct that serves to express an unknowable essence which we cannot grasp as such,” although it represents the totality of the psyche, it is experienced as a center of personality, as the God-image or “the God within us” (Jung, 1928/1966d, p. 238). “But all statements about God,” according to Jung (1954/1976) “have their origin in the psyche and must therefore be distinguished from God as a metaphysical being” (p. 668). Jung (1954/1976) believed that “the whole metaphysical world is understood as a psychic structure projected into the sphere of the unknown” (p. 733). For Jung, the modern mind therefore must withdraw these projections to become conscious of the God-image within. This, to me, as for Corbin (1988b), is a reversal of, yet similar to, the Shi’ite notion of the ontological *tawhid*, where God is *envisaged* as the absolute being yet present in the creation/cosmos.

However, no matter how “objective” Jung likes to understand the unconscious, he remains in the purview of the archetypal *processes*, that is to say, Jung’s psychology gives to human consciousness not the contents of the unconscious but only their image form, for the last analysis for Jung the archetypes are not determined by their suchness, they are only experienced and assigned meaning via consciousness. Let us briefly read Jung’s (1954/1976) words describing the archetype of the Self:

> Further investigation of the collective material of the unconscious, presented by schizophrenics and by the dreams of neurotics and normal people, elicited typical figures or motifs which have their counterparts in myth and may therefore be called archetypes. These are not to be thought of as inherited ideas; rather, they are the equivalent of the “pattern of behaviour” in biology. The archetype represents a mode of psychic

> behaviour. As such, it is an "irrepresentable" factor which unconsciously arranges the psychic elements so that they fall into typical configurations, much as a crystalline grid arranges the molecules in a saturated solution. The specific associations and memory images forming these configurations vary endlessly from individual to individual; only the basic pattern remains the same. One of the clearest of these archetypal figures is the *anima*, the personification of the unconscious in feminine form. . . The corresponding role in a woman is played by the *animus*. A figure common to both sexes is the shadow, a personification of the inferior side of the personality. . . Most important of all is the supposedly central archetype or self, which seems to be the point of reference for the unconscious psyche, just as the ego is the point of reference for consciousness. The symbolism associated with this archetype expresses itself on the one hand in circular, spherical, and quaternary forms, in the "squaring of the circle," and in mandala symbolism; on the other hand, in the imagery of the supraordinate personality (God-image, Anthropos symbolism). (pp. 483-484)

A concept of the Self is best pictured and symbolized, according to Jung, by the circle symbol (mandala) with three things: (a) center point, (b) radius, and (c) circumference. It represents man's psychic totality where the center point symbolizes a reference point of the archetype of the Self.

In the Shi'ite imagination, this center point would be the Sun, from where the Light of God originates. This point of reference is not an ontological space, rather, it

corresponds to the spirit or spark within the human heart. The radii are rays of light, the umbilical cords, or the axes (*Qutb*, Imams in Shi'ism) that illuminate the person's methods of perception, states of being, or imaginal modes of existence (*imaginatio vera*). Man, as Adam or Anthropos stands on the circumference as the image of God, the divine reflection in matter. Mandala is a hermetic image, an unfolding of creation from a point of origin in a fashion that reflects gnostic creation myth and also the old alchemical *secret* (*taqīya*) knowledge of transmutation.

The sixth Shi'ite Imam, Ja'far al-Sādiq (a.s), the teacher of many famous alchemists such as Geber or al-Jābir ibn Hayyān (d. 815 CE), with whose work Jung was familiar, once explained to a Kūfan extremist the concept of *taqīya* or dissimulation where a Shi'a Muslim can deny his or her faith under persecution:

> Keep our affairs secret, and do not divulge it publicly, for whoever keeps it secret and does not reveal it, God will exalt him in this world and put a light between his eyes in the next, leading him to Paradise. (Jafri, 1979, p. 298)

These secrets are safe-guarded arcana understood by the initiated alchemists. They hold the qualities of understanding, and for Jung, they are deep within the transpersonal aspects of the psyche, the archetype of the Self that demands integration. These archetypal secrets are only for the worthy, those persons who are morally inclined to learn for the goodness of humanity.

Gnosis for the Shi'ite philosophers is therefore a secret faith (*iman*) in God's knowledge (which is self-knowledge). That is why "the alchemists considered themselves to be the guardians of a mystery that was not to be divulged to the unworthy" (Edinger,

1994a, p. 7). Gnosis (‘*irfan*) in the Shi’ite sense is thus traditionally considered to be an esoteric body of knowledge and beauty that is integral to the investigation of the inner and outer physical realities, nature itself. *‘Irfan* comprises degrees of God’s unlimited emanations in time, along with wisdom (*Pistis Sophia* or Fatimah) of the inner psychological and spiritual realities that transcend time. To be precise, Shi’ite gnosis, which is embedded in Hermeticism and Neo-Pythagoreanism, moves the act of knowing from an exterior (*al-zāhir*) phenomenal world, to its interior or subtle (*al-bātin*) noumenal world of meaning, virtue, feelings, and ideas that are derived from spiritual or archetypal forces. These inner meanings and feelings require interpretation, for they, as *daimon*, draw people into relationships with them through symbols in which they, too, participate.

My approach to the Ashura symbols in the context of the outer and the inner therefore starts at the circumference of the topic, visiting at many relative yet relevant points and then moving toward the inner center, the kernel or archetypal essence of the soul from where symbols derive their essential meanings.

Gnosis in Shi’ism, as a method of gaining knowledge, takes into consideration three things: (a) mankind, (b) the cosmos, and (c) God. In the Jungian way, gnosis is regarded as an ontology of the Self manifesting as the macrocosm and within the human microcosm—that is, in human experiences of change and contingency.

Even though this study is a psychological inquiry into symbols, I remained open to the ways of knowing that are not just based on empirical evidence and imaginative perceptions, but also open to the deeper spiritual or mystical gnosis of the heart (see the section on “Spiritual Hermeneutics”). I accept Islamic metaphysics because it argues against the claim that the reality of the revelatory Intellect, which is the essence and

totality of everything in Islamic cosmology, including the psyche, is purely unattainable by human consciousness. I think human beings are needed to reveal its higher intentions of knowing.

In the Islamic view, the psyche is a matrix of both spirit and matter. According to Shi'ite belief, when the spirit separates (*separatio* in alchemy) from matter upon the death of a person, the psyche or soul becomes one with the Spirit. In this life, however, the psyche (*al-nafs*) moves with the body through stages (*maqāmat*) of spiritualization for the purpose of returning to its spiritual origin. She journeys from *nafs al-ammārah* (instinctual soul) to *nafs al-lawwāmah* (ethical soul), and then to *nafs al-mutma'innah* (secure or peaceful soul)*, nafs al-ridiyah* (content soul), and *nafs al-kamilah* (complete soul). These are some main ranks of the soul in the self-becoming process of transformation and union, according to Qur'anic teachings.

Similarly, according to von Franz (1992), "Jung even asserted that he would have no objection to regarding the psyche as a quality of matter and matter as a concrete aspect of the psyche" (p. 40), but this is only one side of the spectrum. Depth psychology recognizes both the lower instinctual aspect of the psyche with its infrared pole and its higher spiritual aspect with its ultraviolet pole and everything in between. The different levels of the psyche express different psychological needs from the material to the spiritual. The Islamic levels of *nafs* (soul), in depth psychological terms, may be represented through hierarchical correspondences from animal instincts to moral instincts, from spiritual attainment to spiritual development to becoming whole. The Islamic view is therefore similar to the Jungian in this regard. Additionally, like the Jungian approach, Islamic teachings do not accept only materialistic or only spiritual

investigation of the psyche, which makes the psyche deeper than any substance due to her fluidity in both directions. For a functional, balanced psyche, a balance of body and spirit is necessary.

Although Jung did not accept insights into metaphysical methodologies due to his scientific milieu and the spirit of the time he lived in, from the beginning of his career, he was very much interested in spiritual phenomena, and by the end of his life, he had identified his psychology with gnosis via alchemy. Jung's reflections on spirit and matter, the inner and outer, based on his study of the old alchemical procedures that included both Christian and Islamic works, resulted in the development of his own transference/ countertransference theory in psychotherapy. This theory is important as a base or background to the method used in this study. Like Jung, I recognize this method as a procedural road that connects psychology to ancient philosophy. In other words, just as Jung realized his own subjective assumptions that colored his interpretation of the object of analysis, such as his and his patient's psyche, I remain aware of my own philosophical stance.

Although Jung *strived* for a psychological or balanced method of interpretation, independent of spiritual metaphysics, and pure mechanistic and materialistic approaches to science, this research approach includes in its methods the importance of both the physical *and* metaphysical in the process of knowing and knowledge making. This striving or struggle of the soul (*jihad al-akbar* for Muslims) to unite the opposites led Jung to discover the technique of active imagination. This method is basically dialogical, as already mentioned, in the sense that a person should have a dialogue with an image or a symbol, provided that a symbol is produced by the tension of opposites within the

psyche—the tension between the outer manifest (*al-zāhir*) and the inner invisible (*al-bātin*), in the Islamic sense. Although the psyche is comprised of many polarities and oppositions, Jung identified one of these tensions as male (*logos* or animus) and female (*eros* or anima) forces in the psyche. This idea is explored further in the alchemical discussion of Sol and Luna consciousness, which seems either projected in the Ashura ritual and/or brought together via active imagination or remembering the Karbala events with love and devotion for the Prophet's family.

At this point, it is helpful to emphasize briefly the approach of active imagination in the Islamic sense as a theophanic operation, as Corbin (1958/1969) described it: the "creative imagination" through which God Himself created the world. According to this teaching expounded by Ibn al 'Arabi (d. 1240 CE), within the realm of the imaginal (*ālam al-mithāl*), the divine, by lifting the veils (*kashf*), reveals Himself through the numinous image-symbol or archetype ('*ayn thabīta*) with which the individual is having a conversation. The imaginal realm is the locale where the creator-creature (*khāliq-makhlūq*) meet in Shi'a thought, where the divine is present and at the same time is absent. This is why active imagination, as a research approach for this study, is not a mere fantasy, fiction, or illusion; instead, it must be regarded as a sacred activity due to the symbol's transparency to the hidden divine spirit, which interacts with the visible through the body of the image.

This practice is also embodied in the Islamic *shahadah*, or the first article of faith, "there is no god, but God," as the *coincidentia oppositorum* (the coincidence or conjunction of opposites) or in Arabic *jam' bayna'l-naqīdayn* (Corbin, 1958/1969). When Muslims read or say the *shahadah*, for example, they are basically "witnessing" the

method of active imagination, or what Corbin called the *hieratic* or symbolic way of understanding that returns the manifest form of the creation to its invisible source (See Romanyshyn, 2013, pp. 266–270).

This returning of things to their origin is an imaginative approach to *ta'wil*, hence, a psychological yet monotheistic one. It is, among others, a *hypostasis* (an essential substance) of alchemical hermeneutics understood by Corbin and Jung as the primary method. I am to return the Ashura images—via sympathy and by way of active imagination—from the sensory world to the angelic world.

In this process of return, engaging with symbols is necessary, for it is the symbol that unites the two worlds, unveiling the product of meaning and understanding. Therefore, my sensibility and/or my imaginal sense for things and events of the ritual is not unimportant. On the contrary, I see them as psychic organs or fantasies. They are the *prima materia* of this work with an archetypal power (*himma*) of change and creativity of the heart. Without this power, spiritual alchemy in the *ta'wil* of this work was impossible.

Research Methodology

The methodology of this research is qualitative. According to Ronald L. Grimes (2014), a senior lecturer and co-editor of the Oxford Ritual Studies Series, as well as former Chair of Ritual Studies at Radboud University Nijmegen (the Netherlands), "*methodology* is the meta-activity of reflecting on methods . . . and a *method* is the 'how' of research" (p. 12). In other words, the method is an adherence to a procedure, and methodology requires an understanding or knowledge of the procedures and their crafting. Coppin and Nelson (2005), too, called methodology the *logos* or a way of understanding and attending to *methods*. Methodology in research thereby sees the use of

various appropriations, limits, and relations to methods applied in research against the background of similar and different approaches.

For Grimes (2014), however, methods for studying rituals are basically of two kinds: "The first is practical, on-the-ground know-how: how to gain access to a ritual, interview a participant, or take field notes. The second is so-called higher-order knowledge: *thinking critically, comparing rituals across cultures, or interpreting*" [italics added] (p. 89). I adopted the second method because my inquiry into the Ashura ritual is neither purely rational nor ethnographical. In addition, because my research recognizes the subjective and objective nature of the psyche, and its central focus is within the boundaries of depth psychological discipline, it accords with Grimes's second approach. This is a hermeneutical method for interpreting the symbols of Ashura with soul in mind; to be more exact, with love in mind and heart, which uses the imaginative and creative methods of alchemical and spiritual hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics is a term used generally to mean interpretation of texts, but it also has a philosophical meaning, which is a mode of inquiry. Zimmermann (2015) explained the hermeneutic approach by way of understanding: "Understanding is the interpretive act of integrating particular things such as words, signs, and events into a meaningful whole" (p. 7). In the Islamic world, too, hermeneutics is often applied to the interpretation of the Qur'anic text and the Prophet's sayings (*hadith*). In this research, I therefore used hermeneutical methods of understanding or realizing/knowing (*gnôstikos*) the ritual work. I did not just blindly select texts pertaining to the Ashura ritual. The texts had to make sense and carry authentic meanings of the work.

Various hermeneutical approaches are available for interpretation, such as modern hermeneutics (Hegel), ontological hermeneutics (Heidegger), critical hermeneutics (Habermas), and philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer). I applied alchemical hermeneutics (Romanyshyn, 2013) and spiritual hermeneutics (Corbin, 1974/1998a).

Alchemical Hermeneutics

Coppin and Nelson (2005) indicated that the phenomenologist Robert Romanyshyn has taken the observation of transference and projection, a natural exchange between the knower and the object of knowledge, into the field of research. They said that "borrowing theory and practice from Jung, [Romanyshyn] and his co-author Veronica Goodchild began developing what they call an imaginal approach to research using alchemical hermeneutics as its primary method" (pp. 98–99). Coppin and Nelson (2005) provided five moves of alchemical hermeneutics to reach the imaginal that I am to use as a method in this study. These moves paralleled Jung's approach to the imaginal. For instance, similar to how Jung used word association tests to detect psychic complexes when his patients were triggered or stopped by a word, Coppin and Nelson pointed to the first move of alchemical hermeneutics by stating that a "researcher must pay particular attention to how he or she is stopped by the text" (p. 99). Being stopped by the text is not to be taken as a distraction or interruption. On the contrary, this precious moment is "the moment when the researcher is being questioned by his or her topic" (p. 99). It is in this moment that the soul of the work is intending to want something from the researcher.

Then the researcher can apply the second move, which asks [the reader] "to take the experience in through the body" (Coppin & Nelson, 2005, p. 99). This act avoids conceptual or abstract interpretation, where the moment of pause is not regarded as a

matter of mind alone, but it is felt experientially in the body. This move is essential for this study because reading the hagiographical accounts of the tragedy of Karbala produced powerful emotions and physiological changes. Plus, as we shall see in chapter six, the connection of the body with the mind in the ritual is never completely divorced—regardless of the spiritual intensity of the experience.

The third move in alchemical hermeneutics is "to suspend all traditional attempts to make sense of the text" (Coppin & Nelson, 2005, p. 99). This is more like Gadamer's (1975) "temporal distance" where the suspension of an individual's cherished beliefs goes through changes in its prejudices, and while the researcher is aware of his or her subjective dynamics, he or she allows meanings to emerge from the text. In other words, the person is asked to bear the tension of the transference between themselves and the text. For an authentic interpretation, the researcher must work out his or her complex relations with the text and be ready for what the text reveals as it filters through a complex.

The fourth move is to reveal the "different layers of the transference ranging from the personal level to the cultural-historical level" (Coppin & Nelson, 2005, p. 99). This moment opens a researcher to the possibility of misreading the text; therefore, more focus is needed to discern how the researcher is interpreting the text. Is the meaning of the text coming through a personal complex or a cultural complex? At this moment, according to Coppin and Nelson, "reflective attention helps readers distinguish between the levels, since they might otherwise remain unconscious" (p. 100).

From the moment the text stops the reader in the first move of alchemical hermeneutics, silence is evident in the emotional and reflective moments. The fifth move,

however, is to become a vocal medium for the word, to read aloud, which "opens the imaginal layer within the text" (Coppin & Nelson, 2005, p. 100). In this move, the researcher is asked to go beyond ego participation or intellectual inquiry. By *voicing* the text out loud with the body, the researcher breathes the text, or carries the words in spirit, into the physical world. This voiced moment is filled with inner emotions and images that are extended outwards as if unearthing wounds and complexes that may have remained unconscious in the body. In this sense, the work becomes psychological and spiritual, not just an intellectual exercise of the mind.

To address my research questions, which inquire into the relationship between the process of individuation and the numinous experience that arises during the Ashura ritual, I needed a research design that would convey the procedures of a qualitative approach. Because I intended to move beyond the lenses of history and culture and investigate the psychological and spiritual significance of the Ashura symbols, I had to approach the study through imaginal means. The hermeneutical moves just described fulfilled this need by giving me the *via regia* of interpreting the symbols in their historical and cultural contexts and turning them into the imaginal. The imaginal allows these moves to interpret symbols to disclose more than could have been accounted for through purely empirical or 'intellectual' (*aqli*) methods.

According to Romanyshyn (2013), "alchemical hermeneutics is the offspring of the encounter between the tradition of hermeneutics and depth psychology" (p. 235). I adopted alchemical hermeneutics and an imaginal approach to interpretation because they did not, as Romanyshyn put it, "betray the tradition of hermeneutics; rather, they add to it by taking into account the unconscious" (p. 235). Although I plan to discuss what is

meant by the term 'tradition' (*naqli*) from the Shi'ite perspective of love in the next section on "Spiritual Hermeneutics," for the purpose of methodology, "in alchemical hermeneutics, approach, process, and method all converge upon . . . the unconscious" (Romanyshyn, 2013, pp. 199–200).

The unconscious, from a depth psychological stance, is not only the "*unknown psychic*," as Jung (1954/1969c, p. 185) noted. It also provides the human multivalent methods of inquiry. It is not just its contents that were at one point conscious or capable of being conscious. It is also itself an image not at all derived from ego-consciousness. It is never fully capable of being "made" conscious. In this study, this unconscious aspect of the psyche, from the Shi'ite stance, is the *source* of inspiration, revelation, and experience. It informs the researcher, not just as a way of interpreting what is, but also, what is not.

Spiritual Hermeneutics

Corbin's method of spiritual hermeneutics or *hikāyat* was necessary to see the ritual beyond its narrative or historical accounts. That is why I used *hikāya*t to be the main method for studying the ritual. It allowed the inquiry to be *open* to imaginal love or religious eros. This method is opened to face and communicate with the persons of the archetypal who are friends with God. This communication is clothed in love for the inner, the hidden, the *bātin Alh*, the angel-persons for Shi'ite devotees. Going inward to the source of the outer image is *ta'wil*. This is spiritual hermeneutics, central to Shi'ism.

Alchemical hermeneutics as applied to Shi'ism helped to open the inquiry process to the imaginal realm. Spiritual hermeneutics, which is very close to Jung's method of active imagination and meditation, but it is taken deeper in Shi'ism as contemplation,

helped me to see the phenomenology of communication with the archetypal entities. This is a method where my aim was to go philosophically from the outer level (*in actu*) of the research to the inner depths (*in potentia*) of the Ashura *symbolon*, what Shi'ite Renaissance philosophers such as Sayyid Haydar Amuli and Mulla Sadra called the secret knowledge of Imamology and angelology (Corbin, 1981; Nasr, 1988).

As the union of opposites in alchemy, Shi'a devotees encounter in the imaginal personified figures of their beloved imams and other figures of the *Ahl al Bayt*. With this union, archetypally speaking, the suffering and sorrow turn to joy.

Interpretation of Islamic texts has been a dividing issue between Shi'ism and Sunnism. Although both sects believe the Qur'anic text to be God's eternal word given to the Prophet via the archangel Gabriel, the Holy Ghost, or in Arabic *Jibrā'il* (a.s), for Shi'ites, "the door of interpretation" (*ijtihād*) is not closed. They are open. These doors are like permeable boundaries that take Shi'ites to the place that Corbin called the *mundus imaginalis*, the sacred precinct of the imaginal realm.

Basically, the imaginal is not a literal world in the sense of physical facts. For Corbin, it is a Temple of Light, the Holy Grail. As Cheetham (2015) noted, it is "a mode of being—one which is open to mystery" (p. 27). I believe it is more than a gate to the mysterious, the numinous. Like the philosophers' stone, it *is* a mystery. For Shi'ites, it is a metaphysics, and for Corbin, the heart of spiritual hermeneutics. It represents embodied spirituality that is "the intermediate dimension of things, the dimension of the imagination and the soul" (p. 96). This world is the mysterious field of imagination *and* the action where the movement for images is allowed. The movement is, therefore, a process that forms a personality.

Therefore, the process of this study goes beyond the historical, physical, and literal analysis of Karbala events into the metaphysics of the imagination.

When the soul of the work is open to the text and thus to the events described by the text, it is open to the imaginal, and when the work is open to the imaginal, then it is open to the soul of the ancestors, which becomes a method of remembrance and imaginal love. The soul regains a heavenly attitude of regard in the perspective of forgotten meanings that haunt historical events.

Modern people have lost their rituals and mourning rites, their tragedies. Alchemical hermeneutics, says Romanyshyn (2013), allows researchers to regain their spiritual hermeneutics of love because it holds the "tension between remembering something that is too vital to forget and forgetting it because it is too painful to remember" (p. 271). To maintain the integrity, the heart and soul of this study, the alchemical and spiritual methodologies were crucial because they kept me, the researcher, open to what the work may evoke: dreams, fantasies, ideas, thoughts, images, and pain that can act as guides or what Jung called the *spiritus rector* of the opus. These spiritual guides, if personified, have the potential to give life and meaning to my work. I do not dissociate them from the Shi'a *Ahl al Bayt*.

This is the reason that I reviewed the major traditional texts, which included the Qur'an, hadith of the Prophet, and sayings of the Shi'ite imams. All were spiritual guides to this study. The Prophet and the Shi'ite imams themselves were open to the text and often dialogued with the Qur'anic verses, which in response revealed multiple symbolic and transmutable meanings that now belong to the holistic context of Shi'ite literature and cosmology.

In the Shi'a Sufi tradition, according to Corbin (1958/1969), the spiritual hermeneutic method, which is basically called *ta'wil*, is a research procedure. In terms of interpretation, *ta'wil* means to "bring back to" its origin, where the spiritual meaning behind a text is revealed (*revelatus*). This revelation is considered by many Sufi Shi'a mystics and metaphysicians such as Ibn al 'Arabi (d. 1240 CE), Najm al-Din Kubra (d. 1221 CE), and Mullah Sadra (d. 1640 CE) to be a divine unveiling (*kashf*) where the hidden *Deus absconditus* comes into the light of consciousness.

In the West, James Hillman (d. 2011) considered Henry Corbin the second father of depth psychology, where Jung was the first. Corbin and Hillman adopted and incorporated the method of *ta'wil* in their studies. In the East, Corbin is known as a Shi'ite scholar (*alim*). In addition, I view Corbin as a bridge connecting Jung's philosophy and Shi'ite theosophy (*Hikmat*).

Marcotte (1995) described Corbin's methodology of continental philosophy that he brought into the field of Shi'ite Islamic Studies:

> Although phenomenology of religion also played a role in the elaboration of his [Corbin's] method, he made a strong stand against any method which made history the central element of its approach. His alternative position was more of a spiritual-type phenomenology. (p. 55)

This spiritual-type phenomenology (*kashf al-mahjūb*) reflects my own hermeneutical (*ta'wil*) approach to this study. My approach is not historical remembrance alone. It represents the prophecy and Imamology that leads to the Qur'anic covenant: "Am I not your Lord?" (Q. 7:172). This is a spiritual ongoing work of saving the *phainómenon* by not forgetting the spiritual history of humanity (Corbin, 1980). To do justice to an event, a

different order than what is supplied by "the manuals of history" (Corbin, 1981, p. 14) must be considered. As I see the authenticity of this approach by seeing the revealed mysteries from within and without, Corbin (1980), argued for the necessity to see the interior history of mankind from the imaginal senses, as he writes:

> Now you can see it: whether it's a matter of establishing the phenomena of exterior history as grounded in the interior history of man, or those of the intermediary world which are the visionary manifestation of this interior world of man, to understand the sense, to save the reality, demands the same procedure: *kashf al-mahjûb*, to detach, to unveil that which reveals itself while remaining hidden in the *phainómenon*. I said just now that this is what phenomenology is, and that it is also precisely this that the ta'wil does in the works of our mystical theosophists. It's not a matter of any dialectical construction: It's a matter of leading the observer to a point where he allows himself to see what it is that lies hidden. This essentially is what [spiritual] hermeneutic[s] is. (p. 15)

In the same line of thinking, Romanyshyn (2013) explained that "as a work of un-forgetting," alchemical hermeneutics makes room for a "reiteration of unfinished events" (p. 271), which ritual as an ongoing remembrance implies.

By using both alchemical and spiritual hermeneutic methods, my inquiry used methodological approaches and procedures in a framework that not only complied with the philosophical commitments of depth psychology but also simultaneously honored the traditional relevance of the Shi'ite notion of soul's return to its spiritual source (*Ma'ad*).

In this way, I honored the work of my ancestors by contributing and taking part in their work. And I honor them for taking part in mine.

The method for this study was to conduct text research on the Ashura ritual's historical, hagiographical, theological, philosophical, and growing expressions across cultures from the perspective of alchemical and spiritual hermeneutics.

I investigated parallel rituals to see how those have been researched to learn different models and ideas for how to conduct my study. The moves proposed by Coppin and Nelson (2005) also provided a dynamic epistemological framework suitable to this research because it had a degree of agreeableness with Jung's method of active imagination and the Shi'ite way of interpretation (*ta'wil*) as an expression of the soul. As a result, alchemical and spiritual hermeneutics and their methods were the integral forces of my research. In addition, these two methods taken together created a circle of understanding that offers a synthesis of Shi'ism, depth psychology, and my own understanding (see Figure 4).

This means that the hermeneutical process in my research on the one hand investigated religious transformation in the Shi'a experiences of the Ashura ritual, and on the other hand, it followed my own transformation as I engaged with the symbols of this ritual beyond the texts I studied. What arose in me when working with these symbols may contribute to the knowledge I have gained about this ritual.

Research Area and Time

Being aware of the psyche's *separatio*, the spatial concerns of this study were in two places. First, the research focuses on actual historical events that took place in

Karbala, which is the *baraghā* or an earthy temple for pilgrims. Second, it also takes into account the imaginal temple of tens of millions of Shi'a devotees in the world.

The object of this study is the Ashura ritual as it affects the soul, as understood in the tradition of Shi'ism. This research, therefore, centered on the events of Karbala that took place in 680 CE, of which the ritual body today is a symbolic extension. The research *area* was thus concerned with the historical realities of Karbala that go beyond earthly time into the imaginal matrix of the devotees' psychic experiences.

In the minds of Shi'a devotees, the Karbala events that occurred in the past *are* ever-present, real, living symbols. Just as, for instance, a memorial site brings up images of the deceased, so the Ashura devotee is absorbed by the Karbala images that enter his or her mind, like a receiver tuned to a radio that is already present at the field of sight. "Alchemical hermeneutics," opined Romanyshyn (2013),

> is practiced by one whose consciousness has become attuned to a mythopoetic way of knowing the world and being in it, a way of knowing and being that is attuned to the guise of the wholly, holy other in its disguises. (p. 226)

This holy other in the ritualistic setting is expected to be numinous persons, present even though absent from the bodily senses.

The Ashura ritual has a presence like the tragic images of 9/11 memorials. Romanyshyn (2013) explained, "Memorials are like archetypes insofar as both haunt the time-bound world with the timeless" (p. 226). He further elaborated on this point, which corresponds to Shi'a suffering:

> Memorials situate the event within the moment of that wound, which is deeply embedded in time but the date itself has become a symbol of an event that is now also outside of time. In a similar way, archetypes are present as an absence in every temporal moment, and for Jung they carry the numinous and timeless realities of the soul. (p. 226)

This way of perceiving timeless symbols is a mystical form of perception, according to the Islamic understanding of imagination (Corbin, 1958/1969). This timelessness for Shi'a thought is actually not timeless; it is a real time or eternal Time, hierophanic, or epiphanic (Eliade, 1978).

Earthly time is a projection of this eternal Time. For Corbin (1981), it is a projection of the celestial archetype in its religious (*dīn*) function in the world. Corbin (1981) described Shi'ite cosmogony that "is the epiphany of eternal Time: the created order as a temporal succession epiphanizes the eternal order which hierarchizes all celestial beings" (p. 125). This means that imaginative activity carries the soul back to its origin in stages of time. As the soul approaches subtle states of consciousness, time itself becomes "celestial." Realized psychologically and anthropologically, time (*zamān*) in this sense is apprehended as an incarnate soul who transmutes to the level of "saint-person" when ego-consciousness departs from the sensory activities of the human mind. Awareness gets mixed with the archetypal world in the imaginal, creating a symbolic or mythopoetic consciousness. Each moment becomes liturgical for the believer. Thus, the observer meets the world archetypally as 'the observed,' able to receive and host subjectively the other ethically (*adab*).

In this imaginal state, the Shi'a devotees in the ritual, too, can symbolically receive the past-time wounds of the Prophet's family that took place at Karbala onto themselves as present liturgical time and suffer with them. This act is like a person who is visiting a 9/11 memorial and is transported to a mournful place and time. Here, the observer identifies with the innocent victims, and also host them in the ritual mass ceremonies. In hosting the other, the devotee feels the suffering of the other. In the act of true hosting, one becomes the other. Just as those innocent victims who were cut to pieces by the plane's metal velocity on 9/11, just as those who jumped out of the windows of the World Trade Center, and just as those firefighters who were burned alive, so, too, the Karbala victims and fighters are ever-present at the Day of Ashura. Just as at a 9/11 memorial site, at Karbala, too, people can feel (*sym-pathos*) the archetypal angels manifest, etched in their names inscribed in stone and concretized in time. As Corbin (1981) noted,

> Each of the canonical hours is also entrusted to the celestial being or angel who is its archetype, and takes his name; and in its celestial (*menôk*) entity each of these fractions of time is apprehended as a Person. It is the Person who gives the moments of earthly time their dimension as liturgical moments: one may say that the event of this day *is* this Person, the essence of this day is to be the day of this or that angel after whom it is named. (p. 126)

As Corbin (1981) observed, Hussain is the name engraved on the hearts of Shi'a Muslims. They will never forget this tragedy. Hussain is seen on the surface of the heart, but it is cut deep. In the Shi'ite world, it is permanently fixed (*fixatio*) in memory, in

imagination, and even in the divine Intellect. To see within the heart of a Shi'a, the key to its lock is the name, Hussain. This name activates deeper layers of the Shi'ite psyche.

Jung (1936/1968c) explained:

> The *imaginatio*, as the alchemists understand it, is in truth a key that opens the door to the secret of the *opus*. We now know that it was a question of representing and realizing those "greater" things which the soul, on God's behalf, imagines creatively and *extra naturam*—or, to put it in modern language, a question of actualizing those contents of the unconscious which are outside nature, i.e., not a datum of our empirical world, and therefore an *a priori* of archetypal character. The place or the medium of realization is neither mind nor matter, but that intermediate realm of subtle reality which can be adequately expressed only by the symbol. The symbol is neither abstract nor concrete, neither rational nor irrational, neither real nor unreal. It is always both: it is *non vulgi*, the aristocratic preoccupation of one who is set apart (*cuiuslibet sequestrati*), chosen and predestined by God from the very beginning. (pp. 282–283)

In this amazing passage, Jung clarified the secret of the *opus*. I discuss this from the Shi'ite point of view in chapter 5, but at this juncture, I find that as far as the *telos*, or meaning and purpose of imagination is concerned, it comes through in Jung's statement that the soul is working on God's behalf not on nature as an empirical matter, but on the work of the unconscious—that is, sacred work (*sacra scientia*). Is Jung saying that soul's imagination, as an *a priori* method to create "on behalf of God," that God imagines the world into creation?

In Shi'ite thought, God does not project His creation onto another object, for "He is God, One" (*ahad*) (Q. 112:1). Cosmos and everything in it, space and time, are His creation. He symbolizes the whole, not this or that, neither "abstract nor concrete," because He is outside the soul (*tanzih* or ontological *tawhid*). The only way one can say that God is with or in the soul is through *imaginatio*. This is *tashbih* or epistemological *tawhid* (see Figure 2). Here, in the latter, is the key to the *opus*, in which the suffering, the archetypal tragedy, the splitting wounds of the psyche (*as prima materia*) are transmitted, and then transformed into spiritual work of knowing. The embodied soul, imprinted and molded on earth, is united by (and with) a Spiritual Person, in the imagination. Her predestined telos of spiritualization is decreed by God. Understanding these type-personifications is the passport to understanding Shi'ite's creative imagination in the Ashura ritual. A devotee of *Alh al Bayt*, within his or her own poetic ground of knowing and being, in meeting and suffering with these persons, becomes Shi'a in a deeper sense.

In this research, I tend to the Shi'ite sufferings via creative imagination. Simultaneously, I attend to the etched wounds of the heart while at the same time taking the wounds beyond themselves into the deeper levels of the psyche—reconnecting the historical past to the archetypal present.

Another element about time to keep in mind is that in the Shi'ite view, the Shi'ite-Sunni split was historical because the manifestation of God's revelation *caused* it on earth. It was the revelation coming into earthly time that Sunni Islam emphasized. Shi'as, on the other hand, not only viewed the revelation of the Qur'an as occurring in external time, but also understood it as occurring in metaphysical time, so eternally as a whole.

This study obviously does not get into the nature of Islamic politics, its deep history, or the philosophical nature of the historicity of the Qur'an. The most commonly accepted Shi'ite narratives and hagiographical accounts, however, are used for the discussion in terms of their psychological relevancy of time in relation to the unconscious. For this depth psychological study, whether the historical claims of Shi'ite narratives are considered true or false does not confine or limit the psychological status of Shi'ite faith. In the Jungian sense, then, I am using Shi'ite cosmology as expressed in the practices of Ashura as an overall mythopoetic imagination of the sufferings of the Prophet's Household, the *Alh al Bayt*. Moreover, the concept of synchronicity in Jung's psychology has demonstrated the relativity of time and space, showing that the psyche touches realities that are beyond causality.

I am mindful of the fact that the story of Karbala has been mythologized and many versions of the same account exist, and that they are somewhat disconnected from one another historically. Neither my readers nor I, are in a position to judge—in considering the approach to the unconscious—which version of the Karbala story is historically true or false. Thus, the Karbala reality is assumed to be psychologically true, for the absence of historical evidence for a certain event does not disprove its psychological occurrence and certitude.

For the present study, I am adopting rhetoric that dictates what von Franz (1974) called "archetypal overlapping" (p. 253), where both *qualitative* and *quantitative* motifs of time (and space) are united or "bundled." Both senses of time are contaminants of one another in the unconscious, so to speak. The former is ahistorical, metahistorical, and symbolically in the cyclical sense of *Kairos* or eternal time where the past is ever-present.

This latter time concerns the object of study in the external, or in the linear sense of time, it remains *ipso facto* chronological (*Chronos*). In this time, the unconscious is immersed in the "history of the human mind" (Jung, 1936/1968c, p. 86).

The sixth Imam, Jaffar al-Sadiq (a.s) after whom the Shi'ite law (Jafari) is named, has been credited according to tradition with the saying: "Every day is Ashura, and every land is Karbala." This phrase expresses the interplay between these two senses of inner and outer time I have been describing that psychologically signifies a *hieros gamos* of inner and outer in the imaginal realm experienced by the Shi'a faithful during the Ashura ritual.

For Twelver-Shi'ites, the twelfth Imam, al-Mahdi (a.s), is the present-time Imam (*imām al-zamān*). He was born on Earth, but he is in occultation—that is, he is hidden or difficult to perceive physically by present-day human consciousness, which means he is veiled by the metaphysical drama of cyclical time until God reveals him in due time. The notion of occultation leads to my consideration of Ismaili Shi'ism primarily because of Henry Corbin's work on its cosmology. Ismailism connects to the Gnostic ideas of Anthropos-Angel, or the Iranian man of light. Ismailism is also important for a hermeneutical understanding of cyclical time, but I discuss Imamology from the work of the Safavid philosophers of Twelver Shi'ism.

In depth psychology and Shi'ism, the nature of perceived or experienced time is of two kinds: (a) historical and (b) ahistorical. From the point of view of history, time is understood from a conscious human perspective; hence, the ontology of this study is that the Ashura ritual has gradually developed over centuries into a cross-cultural phenomenon. From the ahistorical perspective, time is eternal or archetypal in the

Platonic sense, seen from the reflective position of the unconscious psyche. Thus, the psychology of Shi'a Muslims is analyzed historically and ahistorically in this work.

Historically, this research traces the earliest development of Shi'ite tendencies during the life of the Prophet and immediately after his death. It also surveys Ashura's formal transformations according to the shifts of the cultural psyche of the Muslim people—the Safavid period (1501–1736 CE), when for the first time, Twelve-Imam Shi'ism became the officially recognized religion of a Muslim country; the Qajar period (1785–1925 CE); and the Pahlavi period (1925–1979 CE), which according to the research data, seems to give Twelver-Shi'ism its distinctive character.

Seeing through this movement of historical time, I attempt to get at the archetypal forces and/or the immortal "persons" behind the Ashura ritual as the central focus. This means that the aim of this dissertation is to interpret the acts of the ritual with the potential inner unconscious motivators seen outwardly as projections of the Shi'ite psyche, using the operations and images of alchemy.

Alchemy is one way or area that analyzes the unconscious or ahistorical psyche. Alchemy is a process work (*opus*), an ancient royal art of transmutation, or transformation of the soul to its original primordial consciousness. It draws from the ancient Greek and Egyptian cultures, Christian Gnosticism, Indian spirituality, and Chinese and Iranian literature. My focus is on medieval alchemy because it holds together as if in its glass vase, the one-thousand-year-old (c. 600–1600 CE) recipe of Hermetic philosophy, which was, according to Bernoulli (1960), "saved by the Arabs, who took over the tradition from the Greeks" (p. 309). Consequently, alchemy can be considered a mystical thread of monotheistic wisdom traditions, on the one hand, and a

rich pagan philosophy of Greece, Egypt, and Iran, on the other. Edinger (1994a) commented the following about alchemy:

> Although alchemical writings are complex, confused, and even chaotic, the basic scheme of the opus is quite simple. It is as follows: The purpose is to create a transcendent, miraculous substance, which is variously symbolized as the Philosophers' Stone, The Elixir of Life, or the universal medicine. The procedure is, first, to find the suitable material, the so-called *prima materia*, and then to subject it to a series of operations that will turn it into the Philosophers' Stone. (p. 9)

Few researchers have attempted to weave Ashura's phenomenon with the complexity of alchemical traditions that analyze and preserve the Hermetic idea of "as above, so below." This idea exerted great influence on Jung's model of the psyche. In this idea, the operation of *separatio* and *coniunctio* is evident.

Corresponding to the *tashbih/tanzih* Unity in Shi'ism I discussed earlier, in Hermetic philosophy, too, in the Jungian sense, the principle of all polarities is the archetype of Unity. The perception of the space/time continuum as humans know it, however, is different in proportion to its *separatio*. In what Jung called the unconscious in contradistinction to consciousness, for instance, time is trans-historical or symbolic because it possesses an unknown element, unlike historical time. So, too, the spatial reality and movement of images are different in the unconscious. The cosmogonic idea turned inward, that is, psychologically, is that the conscious mind can understand the other side of the unconscious dream-like images only through symbols. In other words, it is through symbolic imagery that human beings are able to penetrate the purpose and

meaning of the outer world. Because it is essential in depth psychology to understand the unseen causal realities that underlie the outer behavior, which in this case manifest through the Shi'ite suffering in their rituals, I must keep in mind symbolic understanding from both a depth psychological and a Shi'ite perspective. From the perspective of the unconscious psyche, then, I can attempt to interpret how Shi'ite symbols in the Ashura rituals express archetypal enactments understood from Jung's approach to alchemy. At this point, one may ask, "Why alchemy?" The following discussion identifies and extends four reasons.

Alchemy

A method for the soul. In Arabic, *al-kīmiyā* was a secret science of transmuting base metals into gold. Gold was believed prehistorically to be a perfect metal that earth made in her womb. What took the earth millions of years to accomplish, humans could do in days (Eliade, 1978). In developing remarkable techniques to create gold, the alchemists discovered a different kind of gold, a philosophical gold. Basically, in depth psychological terms, this gold is a metaphor for an archetypal wholeness made by going through organizing and renewing phases. Remarkably, what happens on the physical level of the base metals also occurs in the mind. As a result, lead to gold represented an old muddy mind to a new refined one. This new consciousness is not new; however, it is really old. Jung used the Greek term archaic (*archaïkós*) or primordial psyche as the pure mind of one's own inborn Self, which lies dormant as a potential in the human being. Alchemy is a process of refining and revealing this Self.

In this inner metamorphosis, the old alchemists found the Self within, which the gnostic tradition considers a divine spark or light imprisoned in human beings (Jonas,

1958). Being wary of religious orthodoxy, the alchemists/mystics gave this light many names such as the philosophers' stone, *lapis*, or *al-iksir*. This light became their object of desire, a knowing and being by a twofold method of experiment and experience. In fact, for medieval Muslims, this light spark became a realized sacred state (*Al ilm al-ilahi*). It was personified as *Sophia* (*Hikmat* in Shi'ism or *Theo-sophia*). The Christian alchemists recognized it as the Christ, the second Adam. For Shi'a thinkers, Christ within is close to the Imam. This sacred knowledge was an amalgamation of their religious conviction, craft, art, and science that became, due to inquisition and orthodoxy, a secret philosophy in the form of esoterism or occultism. The alchemists communicated this knowledge with a stealthy term, "water" or *aqua permanence*, just as "salt" meant mind or consciousness. Jung (1963) was able to see through hundreds of these metaphorical terms:

> I became aware that the unconscious undergoes or produces change. Only after I had familiarized myself with alchemy did I realize that the unconscious is a process, and that the psyche is transformed or developed by the relationship of the ego to the contents of the unconscious. . . . Through the study of . . . collective transformational processes and through the understanding of alchemical symbolism I arrived at the central concept of my psychology: *the process of individuation*. (p. 209)

The old science of alchemy was a materialistic and spiritual process, as well as a secret knowledge known only to a few. In alchemy, Jung found evidence for his philosophical views of the unconscious. For Jung, this evidence was the mystery of the unseen pleroma rather than a real human secret. In other words, Jung believed this alchemical perspective was projected (or revealed by God in the Shi'ite sense) onto the

physical plane of existence. Jung saw in the seen world the psychic operations depicting the "chemical wedding." Jung symbolically realized the soul's ideal goal in alchemy, which, he interpreted, was to unite with the inner spirit. The visionary psychology found in alchemy symbols, the images that alchemists drew from their work with imagination and meditation, revealed Jung's model of the individuation process somewhat precisely. Jung (1936/1968c) quoted a 16th-century treatise:

> They say also that different names are given to the stone on account of the wonderful variety of figures that appear in the course of the work, inasmuch as colours often come forth at the same time, just as we sometimes imagine in the clouds or in the fire strange shapes of animals, reptiles, or trees. (p. 248)

At a 1952 interview at the Eranos conference, Jung added:

> The alchemical operations were real, only this reality was not physical but psychological. Alchemy represents the projection of a drama both cosmic and spiritual in laboratory terms. The *opus magnum* had two aims: the rescue of the human soul and the salvation of the cosmos. (as cited in Marlan, 2005, p. 10)

Jung's statements were often twofold, leading to confusion. He often contradicted himself in the same statement. First, by closely reading these previous statements, it is clear that Jung realized the alchemists were writing in symbolic language about the human soul: her contents, her attributes, and her interactions with the spirit (light) and the cosmos (matter). In their texts, the alchemists were talking about chemical and metallurgical experiments they performed in the laboratory environment. The images

they drew were seen by Jung, however, not only in light of transforming metals, but also as the alchemists were watching their own projected unconscious drama unfold inside their glass vessels or retorts. They were talking about the philosophical gold, the divine spark within the unconscious psyche, in the unknown of the unknown (*ignotum per ignotius*). That is why alchemical images and texts are so strange and mysterious to modern thinkers. They contain unconscious dreamlike elements in mythic/ astrological terms: angel and dragon, sun and moon, king and queen, and so on.

Second, Jung pointed to the salvific aim of the alchemical process, which was to be achieved by the soul's transformation through one's own experience of the Self. This was dangerous for the old alchemists, not only because of the inquisition of the Catholic church, but also for one's own mental health, for going alone through one's shadow, the unwanted qualities, the *nigredo*, or archaic daemonic agencies can lead an individual to suffering, to a wrong path, and to disharmony. This could lead to "the black mass," or *massa confusa* (Jung 1954/1967d, p. 324) with no self-control. As a result, a person becomes a victim of the inner circumstances or a drama projected outwardly onto the dark spirit of the time.

A Sufi saying is, "*He who has no shaykh, has Shaitan* (the devil) *for a shaykh*." Although this saying has many meanings, for Jungians, it could be interpreted in two ways. First, going through the shadow, people must need a helping hand, a master, a teacher, a guide. Going down to the unconscious alone can be dangerous. Second, I want to express that when an individual does not realize his (or her) own shadow and is all-good all the time, then he unconsciously finds a person on whom to project his demons or

her complexes. In other words, if there is no guide for the work, then the shadow itself (the devil, so to speak) will be the guide.

The Sufis have it right when they often repeat a hadith in this context. The Prophet was asked about Satan: "Everyone is born with Satan save two people. God has exempted them." "Who are they?" He was asked. The Prophet replied, "They are Mariam bint Asad and Jesus ibn Mariam (Mary and Jesus)." "You too? O' Messenger of Allah! You have Satan too?" "Yes!" said the Prophet. "But the only difference is that I have *transformed* my Satan into a Muslim" (W. C. Chittick, personal communication, 1998). This [transformation] causes the adept, the seeker, the believer, not only to create a higher consciousness of the Self by knowing his or her shadow aspect of the psyche, but also to integrate the purified Self in the perfection of a being, the microcosm (*insān al kamil*). Alchemy, therefore, plays a crucial role in depth psychology. For Jung, the ensouled spirit integrated into perfect balance with matter is a corresponding expression of a product of the highest and most noble function of the psyche, and of the world—thus bringing the salvation of the world.

Another hadith comes to mind. The companions of the Prophet were overjoyed on winning a war with the Meccan infidels. They were congratulating the Prophet on accomplishing *jihad* (holy war, struggle, or demanding effort in the work). The Prophet said, "You have won the smaller *jihad*." He was then asked, "What is the bigger *jihad*: O' Apostle of Allah?" The Prophet answered, "The bigger *jihad* is the inner war, the battle within your own soul" (W. C. Chittick, personal communication, 1998). This struggle of the soul (*jihad nafs*) corresponds to the Sufi/Shi'ite idea of spiritual chivalry, where the

soul-persons on earth return to their archetypal consciousness. For Jung, this bigger *jihad* is the confrontation with one's inner unconscious personalities (*auseinándersetzung*).

In what follows in Part 2, observances of the Ashura ritual demonstrate this inner *jihad* of Shi'a Muslims in doing the alchemical work. As a case in point, the ritual stands for a container for the psychosomatic processes that are explored using the language of depth psychology and Shi'ism, to point to the Shi'a wounds. Pointing to the Shi'a wounds does not mean seeing Shi'a mourning as bystanders; instead, readers are face-to-face with the Shi'a devotees, raising the unconscious suffering to the level of awareness—that is, to sympathize, to suffer with them, to gain knowledge in the experience not by experiment alone. In this way, the reader and the writer will understand together.

The struggle for perfection in the womb. Alchemy also bridged mythic understanding with scientific experiments. This influenced religions and eventually led to modern chemistry. Eliade's (1978) "embryological notion of the origin of ores" (p. 50), brilliantly conveyed to a modern audience that the ancient alchemists believed minerals and base metals to be the embryos within the womb of the earth. Moreover, it was a sacred task of humans, particularly smiths, smelters, and alchemists, to carry forward nature's task of transmuting metals to their perfect or complete form in their laboratories. Eliade (1978) explained:

> The tendency of Nature is to perfection. But since gold is the bearer of a highly spiritual symbolism ("Gold is immortality", say the Indian texts repeatedly), it is obvious that a new idea is coming into being: the idea of the part assumed by the alchemist as the brotherly savior of Nature. He

> assists Nature to fulfill her final goal, to attain her "ideal", which is the perfection of its progeny—be it mineral, animal or human—to its supreme ripening, which is absolute immortality and liberty (gold being the symbol of sovereignty and autonomy). (p. 52)

Depth psychologically, this means that alchemists who were persecuted by the church and the caliphate for heretical views projected the archetype of perfection onto gold. Further, if this is true, then this means that something perfect exists inside human beings.

For the old alchemists, gold was immortal, perfect, ideal, sovereign, and an autonomous object. Gold transcended all other metals. It was free of rusting (disease). In religious terms, among the metals, gold symbolized God in man and in nature. The alchemists used the image of the sun to symbolize gold. Thus, salvation depends on the perfection of this sun in man.

Psychologically, for Jung, God can only be known or come into consciousness as image(s); therefore, he used the term God-*image* or *imago dei*. From antiquity to Medieval times and pre-Gnostic times, the idea of perfection led to soteriological speculations, which Jung (1953/1968d) amplified in his book *Psychology and Alchemy*.

For Jung, an image is made of two powers (dyad): spirit and matter or light and darkness. The spirit is unlimited in its essence, and matter is limited because its complex nature is to bring change. As a rule, therefore, in Jung's psychology this two-ness of the psyche is prevalent. But matter is not without soul. And the soul is not without the spirit. Hence, two spirits or lights are present: one is ego-consciousness, and the other is also consciousness, but this consciousness is in the unconscious as the other side of the polarity and totality, the hidden Adam, a prototype of a perfect being. The alchemist

Senior associated these two consciousnesses with two suns (von Franz, 1980). The problem arises, however, when people think that these suns are two different suns. In actuality, they are the same Sun, or *Nous* with two principles: *bātin* and *zāhir*. This Sun is the "Nous in the form of Mercurius or the tail-eating Uroboros," according to Jung (1937/1968e, p. 345).[12]

But the two principles, spirit and matter as consciousness and the unconscious, are in a constant battle with one another. In alchemy, one tries to "devour" the other, and the other repels it in order not to be consumed by the one.

As a paradoxical reality in Shi'ism, the human psyche mirrors this uroboric Sun, symbolized as the soul of the Soul. For Zosimos, it is the "spiritual Man of Light" (Jung, 1937/1968e, p. 366). For Twelvers' Shi'ite philosophers, it is the Imam, the object of self-knowledge, but he is also the active participant in the knowing of himself. As a result, he represents the subjective psyche as a mirror, who carries the reflected body of the Sun and is also perceived by the spiritualized sun. In depth psychological terms, this means that the sun (with the lower-case *s*) is the ego, which is carried by the totality of the psyche, the third feminine power which reflects her own subtle nature, the spirit, or the divine spark. The Sun (with the capital *S*) moves onto her heavier ego, the body of the mirror, the corporeality of the mirror as being in the physical world. Further, the idea of the alchemical work is for the body to go through transmutations as the degree of the spiritual Sun's rays is increased or decreased, but the Sun's rays as God's rays are constant, so it is the perfection of the mirror that dictates the light's intensity. This mirror is the philosophers' stone in the human kernel, which has to be purified.

Like the yin/yang symbol of two fishes, two cosmic *processes* of the psyche exist: a *separatio*, *divisio*, or *solutio* and then a *coagulatio*, *coniunctio*, or *matrimonium*, to use Latin terms of alchemy. Basically, this means that reality, which is made up of a quaternity of elements (earth, water, air, and fire) and four qualities (hot, cold, dry, and moist), must be separated or unfolded for purification, and then through further work, the elements and qualities must fold together in harmony to create a perfect human being. The idea is that this perfect human being can save the soul of the world.

In gnostic terms, this idea of perfection is the microcosmic struggle (*jihad* in Islam) of light and darkness, and the Primordial Man (Anthropos, Pūrusha in Hinduism, or Gāyomart in Mazdaism) is the savior of these two natures. This combining is in the sense that he [the alchemist savior] unites the two, for the goal of his *opus* is to harmonize the two in perfect balance. This perfection is symbolized by the alchemist's identification with the philosophers' stone. The Self *is* the stone, and in Shi'ism, this synthesized synthesizer is symbolized as the Imam, the object of *walayah*.

Consequently, the devoted philosopher "becomes" *his* or *her* imam in the sense of understanding *his* or *her* Self. In the ritual act, the believer suffers as the Imam suffered at the battle of Karbala. He or she activates the archetype of sacrifice. In the process of cathartic flagellation, Shi'a devotees are releasing the archetypal energy of chivalry.

Metaphysics of imagination. Just as modern physicists and mathematicians *discover* (or at least try to unveil) the universal order within the physical universe by the effort of calculating experimental data and expressing them in symbolic formulas, so, too, did the old alchemist mystics work on matter to liberate energy descended in matter. This

[12] On Jung's and Corbin's understanding of the sun symbol, see Kingsley's (2018) references, p. 824. For

alchemical work (*opus*), this effort, and this struggle are all discussed alongside the Ashura ceremonies. Instead of using the sense of a profane scientific eye, however, this process of knowing or discovering the principle of order is seen from a religious perspective.

Before moving to the complexities of the Ashura ritual, a clear distinction must be made between the modern way of seeing and the old way of seeing. Simply put, unlike Newton's or Einstein's perspectives, the alchemists fantasized about the universal principles as sacred powers in matter that needed to be redeemed.

According to Jung (1954/1967c), this old fantasy was paradigmatic in "medieval natural philosophy . . . when symbol formation still went on unimpeded, that is, when there was still no epistemological criticism of the formation of images" (p. 274). Edinger (1995) attributed this lack of "epistemological criticism" to the fact that the alchemists were able to "fantasize at liberty, and describe, using the categories of one's own fantasy, the phenomena of the outer world as seen in the test tube or the retort" (p. 19). In other words, what was seen inside the psyche was not what the outer world was actually revealing to a person. Because the phenomena of the outer were seen as the inner psychic categories. Modern chemists cannot do that anymore because now they can make obvious distinctions between subjective data and objective data. But what is the basis of this distinction? It is via the transformation of one's perspective. This interpretation is the heart of Jung's reification of all experiences that takes place in the psyche.

This notion of the subjective into objective, and vice versa, can also be witnessed in the Shi'ite philosophy of Mulla Sadra's which describes the spirit as a body. According

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the Shi'ite understanding of the sun/light, see Suhrawardi (1999).

to Corbin (2006), Sadra "is the philosopher of metamorphoses, of transubstantiations" (p. 343). This imaginal transformation is illustrated in the Shi'ite notion of categorical knowing in Haydar Amuli's epistemology. What this epistemology tells us is that human rational consciousness (*aql*) can go through stages of higher knowing (*tariqa* and *haqiqa*) without too much criticism of the lower knowledge (*sharia*). In this way, Amuli was attempting to unite all sectarian philosophies in Islam (see Figure 10).[13] But for us, this means that what is seen as physical realities transforms into subtle realities. What we see phenomenologically as actions in one's personality (*sharia*) tells us about his or her psychological dynamics. And what is understood as psychic ways (*tariqa*) or archetypal intentions—behind the acts—can also tell us about their spiritual reality (*haqiqa* or truth).

Jung (1955–1956/1970a) insists that alchemy helps us understand the polarity of experience because [alchemy] acts as a bridge from what is known to what is unknown or forgotten. However, this insight itself is a modern understanding if we take Jung's notion of epistemological criticism to be valid. It is not the understanding of the old alchemists or gnostics, because the old alchemists lacked criticism or epistemological discernment, as modern humans do. They possessed a metaphysics of imagination unlike our current discursive knowledge or modern epistemology. Shi'ite theosophers such as Surawardi, Ibn al 'Arabi, and Sadra gave us, as illustrated by Corbin (1969; 1981), the notion of the imaginal (*mithali*), a mediating metaphysics between the purely intellectual (*aqli*) and the sensible (*hissi*), a realm which the Western mind lost since the age of science about 500 years ago (see Jung, 1951/1968; Tarnas, 1991). Jung realized this metaphysics only from

[13] Also see Schuon (1984). A comparative study is possible, although Schuon is a controversial figure.

a point of his psychologizing. This is because it was the experience, which was important for Jung.

For the Shi'ite, as far as the participants of the Ashura ritual, we can say borrowing from Corbin, that "on the one hand it [*mundus imaginalis*] immaterializes the Sensible Forms," and on the other hand, "it 'imaginalizes' the Intellectual Forms to which it gives shape and dimension" (p. 25). Both forms are present in the experience of the imaginal. This imaginal is very important to understand because it contains content as archetypal forms, as Jung understood. The latter is personified in rituals the world over and are still alive in the Shi'ite psyche today. They come in the ritual from a personal nature but are autonomous beyond our conscious understanding. In the transcendental sense, they are in the *malakut*, or in the angelic pleroma. This is equivalent to Jung's collective unconscious, where archetypes such as animus and anima affect consciousness. But their essence lay even beyond the *malakut*, according to Shi'ite metaphysics.

This means that Shi'ite metaphysics of imagination stands between the transcendent Godhead and the phenomenal world. It is the mediator of human and divine relations. That is to say, it is the mediating power that unites the two principles in a syzagy, their "*chymical wedding*," a bi-polar unity that is the essence of the soul seen in its original nature (*qudrat*). This alchemical idea creates a realization of a third, which is the auditory or visionary knowledge of the imagination.

A bridge to and from: A nonlinear method. A cyclical or an ouroboric way (*tartīb al-mazāhir*) can be used for seeing metaphysical imagination. Samuels et al. (1986) indicated:

> Jung thought that alchemy, looked at from a symbolic and not a scientific eye, could be regarded as one of the precursors of the modern study of the unconscious and, in particular, of analytical interest in the transformation of personality. The alchemists projected their internal processes into what they were doing, and, as they carried out their various operations, enjoyed deep, passionate emotional experiences along with spiritual ones. Crucially, they did not attempt to split off experience from activity and in this way, too, they link with a contemporary psychological attitude, at least as interpreted retrospectively. (p. 12)

This psychological explanation of alchemy is valid for looking at religious rituals, mainly because it directs the researcher to see the inseparability of the inner psychic experiences and outer activities of the participants (as Jung saw in the alchemists' work). Jung met alchemy from a symbolic, not from a scientific eye; therefore, alchemy can be regarded as one precursor of the modern study of the unconscious and, in particular, of analytical interest in the transformation of personality.

I am not discounting the esoteric point of view, however. On the contrary, I am using alchemy as a bridge also to see the Shi'ite perspective. What I mean to question in Jung's statement (Samuels et al., 1986, p. 12) is the Jungian notion that the alchemists did not split off experience from activity because they were ignorant of the difference, and so unknowingly their operations were mere projections of the collective unconscious on the physical plane of matter. I think this is true to some extent, but it is not the whole truth. Jung was often criticized for his reductionistic, psychologized reinterpretation that he projected onto alchemy, and Gnosis (See Bair, 2003, and Ribi, 2013, for theoretical

differences with Hans Trüb and Martin Buber). The point here is to recognize Jung's worldview—as a culturally conditioned interpretation, a sort of European enveloping, a rationalistic understanding, or too much introverted psychologism—that he placed onto alchemy. Even Jung recognized that active imagination involves consciousness *and* the unconscious. So, consciousness, whether collective, or as a historically conditioned factor, cannot be escaped. That is why alchemy maintains terminology rooted in its historical connection to the Arab language and its Islamic concepts. It is embedded in its "culture" and passed on.

The word *alchemy* itself has Arabic roots. However, one should be aware that what Jung emphasized was not the personal, but rather the archetypal reality of alchemy, which is not Arabic, Greek, Indian, or Chinese. They are all faces of alchemy, clothed in culture, facing the inner universal realities. The roots Jung saw are symbolic and archetypal.

In this way, the alchemical procedures interpreted by depth psychology in a culturally conditioned way are still concerned ultimately with archetypal reality. This meeting of the historical and the archetypal occurs in the imaginal, where it has the potential to heal. "To heal," noted Edinger (1994), originally meant "service to the gods" (p. 2), such as self-knowledge. This amounts to the universal maxim: "Know thyself and hence your Lord." Healing corresponds to the psyche's process of individuating itself. Becoming whole expresses an archetype of unification. This archetype unites the two opposites. The function of this archetype is not only to project, but it is also to understand. That is its aim for projection. This is the reason unification creates a third, a

new perspective, a light figure named *filius philosophorum*, which in Shi'ite alchemy corresponds to the Face of God (*hujjat ullah* or *walayah*)—discussed in chapter six.

To elaborate further on the point of projection, Rowland (2013) observed, "Jung is inevitably drawn beyond the limitations of the notion of projection, with its home in the subject/object division" (p. 113). Rowland echoed the hermetic principle by writing that "alchemy adhered to a holistic view of reality where matter, spirit, and human soul exist as inter-related, this perspective helped Jung construe the psyche in a new way" (p. 113). What is this new way?

This new way realized by Jung is a method of knowing the religious function embedded in the deeper unconscious. It is a guide, a teacher friend, a creative imagination in dialogue with the figures of the collective unconscious. In the Shi'ite sense, it is the angelic world.

The Medieval alchemists were the philosopher-scientists of their time. They were aware of the work's secret requirements and methods. They had intentions. Inwardly, however, they were unconscious of their own inner correspondences, according to Jung, but something is seen in their laboratory procedures. The Medieval alchemists had a methodical beginning and ending, seeming to have a goal (*telos*) in mind. The work was not all chaos. The term "*prima*" in *prima materia* plus its many symbolic meanings should be sufficient to support this fact. For the "prime" matter was also the end matter.

For Jung (1937/1968e), *prima materia* was the secret of alchemy; it carried "the projection of the autonomous psychic contents" (p. 302). Consequently, the *telos* is a projection, and it is also experienced in the end. Why else did the alchemists practice this art for centuries if they did not experience the result of their work? Through the work,

this *telos* became a progressive movement fulfilling the projection's intention. The aim was to find a secret in this primal dark matter, a *massa confusa* or chaos wherein the alchemists were able to *see* something. Unbeknownst to them, modern science can discern what the alchemists saw; they saw the ground of their own outwardly projected drama. This inner drama played out in mythic and religious images, but the discovery in the work was often not what the original intention of the work was. The unconscious often surprised the alchemists.

This continues to happen in labs today until a pattern is observed in repeated experiments. This suggests that the alchemical work on metals was *not* "nothing but" projections once the alchemists realized patterns. Jung believed that because modern rational consciousness was superior to the old alchemists', the libido (psychic energy) must now be lowered to engage in active imagination. The old alchemists did not have to do that. Now we are in the position to say that Jung's idea may be based on an inflated European bias based on Darwinian evolution—that can lead us far from our topic.

For this study, I propose that *in* the Ashura ritual ceremonies, the Shi'a devotees are not merely projecting the contents of their unconscious. The Ashura ritual is not spellbinding in the sense that the believers' conscious state is undifferentiated. Although it would be correct to say that the Shi'ite mind is easily lured to a state of participation mystique. But something else is going on in the ritual besides projections, just as it was in the laboratories of the alchemists. Ashura participants are, and have been for centuries, creatively imagining and experiencing the Karbala images. They are deliberately mourning and suffering *with*, rather than *from*, specific archetypal figures in mind, namely, the Prophet's family members, the *Ahl al Bayt*. They have a certain goal in mind.

These figures are clearly grasped by the mind of the adept, and they are partly the product of conditioning through the repetition of the ritual every year, similar to the repeated experiments of Medieval alchemists and modern scientists. These figures are personified at will. The archetypes behave habitually as specific symbols listening to the Shi'a supplications, seeing them in worship, and in turn, helping, guiding, and affecting the Shi'ite psyche in the same pattern-like fashion for a long time. But in the collective ritual setting, participants are most impacted by a greater energy. In the ritual, the believers' emotional state is indeed heightened due to the participation of these archetypal persons. This allows sympathetic transferences from both the devotees and the archetypal persons, for this drama is taking place actively, not passively. Jung (1937/1968e) discussed the bi-unity of active imagination:

> This method enables us to get a *grasp* [italics added] of contents that also find expression in dream life. The process is in both cases an irrigation of the conscious mind by the unconscious, and it is related so closely to the world of alchemical ideas that we are probably justified in assuming that alchemy deals with the same, or very similar, processes as those involved in active imagination and in dreams, i.e., ultimately with the process of individuation. (p. 346)

In this passage, Jung used the word "grasp," which is different from "understanding." Although understanding often comes after one grasps the reality of a thing, in this case, the unconscious contents come to be known, for the word "grasp" denotes holding. Individuals must meditate and/or contemplate what they hold in the psyche in order to comprehend the contents fully, that is, understand them archetypally and meaningfully.

Otherwise, the contents of the objective psyche go back to the unconscious realm without ever being touched by awareness, even though they are somehow perceived by the senses (sensorium mirror) and other psychic functions. Vigilance is required in opening the "doors" of perception, asking, "Who is it?" In the end, understanding can be said to be a fusion of perception, grasping, and hosting. In dreams, the contents are projected by the unconscious and perceived by the psychic mirror. That does not mean the person understands them or even that they touch conscious reality. In active imagination, however, the grasping and hosting can be intrinsic to the experience of the perceived images. For instance, this concept is observed in *The Red Book* and *The Black Books*, where Jung consciously hosted the figures of his unconscious.

Throughout Jung's work, he speculated that the unconscious contents in active imagination express their desire autonomously as archetypal figures like they do in dreams. They want to come into human consciousness for the purpose of communication, as if they are the hidden treasure and want to be known. In Shi'ism and depth psychology, active imagination is more than a fantasy. It is not a willy-nilly planted projection of the unconscious. In the Ashura ritual, the Shi'ite psyche, as a whole, has a purpose, a goal behind the spiritual devotion. It is love and participation in the other. It is a meeting of two personalities, where one grasps intuitively, and the other understands in a dynamic dialogue of religious Eros. In the imaginal, one sees through the object of love and becomes the object. As a result, it is possible to see psychologically the phenomenology of this dialogue happening with two persons: (a) the ego-consciousness of a Shi'a believer and (b) the believer's inner archetypal figures of the *Ahl al Bayt*. It is in this imaginal unification (*religio*), this psychosomatic conjunction (*coniunctio*), this meeting

point in a perspectival bridge where archetypal spirit has substance, and the ego-body contains spiritual space, that this dissertation work brings together the ideas of Jung's psychology and Shi'ism.

Research Procedures

My research design relates to depth psychology in two ways, addressing two lacunae within the discipline. First, the research gives to the Western mind an Islamic way of experiencing the numinous aspect of the soul and understanding the individuation process. Second, the research receives from depth psychology a Jungian and alchemical understanding of Ashura symbology.

To accomplish this, I interpret the ritual's stages of suffering evoked on the Day of Ashura by seeing them in light of the stages/operations of alchemy described by Jung and others. This serves to unveil the psychological dynamics underlying the dramatic acts in the ritual. The operations of alchemy can be seen in the imagery described by amplification methods. Jung (1937/1968e) explained amplification:

> The method of alchemy, psychologically speaking, is one of boundless amplification. The amplification is always appropriate when dealing with some obscure experience which is so vaguely adumbrated that it must be enlarged and expanded by being set in a psychological context in order to be understood at all. That is why, in analytical psychology, we resort to amplification in the interpretation of dreams, for a dream is too slender a hint to be understood until it is enriched by the stuff of association and analogy and thus amplified to the point of intelligibility. (p. 289)

The Ashura ritual rites are dreams in the sense that the believer holds imaginal imagery. I have to give context to these images within their historical texts, in light of hagiographical accounts, and as a part of religious mythology. I want to be precise as much as this symbolic study allows; therefore, to structure my research data in an orderly fashion, I adopted Edinger's (1994a, 1994b) course. It is a sequential way of explaining the central symbols in the staging process of transformation. I did not amplify to exhaustion; rather, I linked alchemical imagery around a particular operation. Although this procedure can seem clustered, an intrinsic sequence follows in a direction: individual, the relationship between two people, and collective group setting. This means that I looked at archetypal imagery active in a Shi'a devotedness, intrapsychically first, then interpsychically in a person-to-person relationship, and then in the collective interaction of Shi'ite philosophy with other religious thought. In addition, I did not anticipate a need for this sequence of analysis for each symbol and/or stage.

In what is to follow, I identify the archetypal representation in a stage of the ritual. Then using symbols and Shi'ite terminologies in correspondence with alchemical language, I evaluate by interpretation (*ta'wil*) and draw out depth psychological meanings behind the symbols.

Another way of explaining this procedure is that as I described the physical images of Ashura and its history, I identified archetypes with what the Ashura images symbolize in each alchemy stage. Then, I drew attention to the different categories of psychological analysis in each stage, as was possible.

Ethical Considerations

If I was to name three stages of this research, they would be ethical, imaginal, and metaphysical.[14] I did not conduct this research at the expense of the Ashura ritual, as it has been traditionally understood by Shi'ism. I aimed to understand its symbols with respectful, open receptivity to what they might mean from a depth psychological perspective without being reduced to it or alchemy.

I did not rely on participants or any experimental methods on human subjects. While keeping the research focused on the questions of my topic, I approached my research with an open mind, understanding Ashura's symbolic language as the Other. Further, in accordance with the depth psychological methods that I implemented in my hermeneutical text-based research, a moral awareness was required. For instance, in dealing with religious texts, Jung's feelings about morality were evident when he said in *Answer to Job* (1952/1969a), "One must not tax an archaic god with the requirements of modern ethics" (p. 371). This means that even though the mentality of a person performing the ritual stages of Ashura might seem quite different from a modern act or interpretation, as a researcher, I must not see it only with subjective or even dogmatic lenses. I will base the validity of translating Ashura symbols into modern language on understanding and respecting the Shi'ite perspective first. As a researcher, I, therefore, offer a self-reflective interpretation of my research texts with conscious respect for the scholarship regulations of depth psychology *and* the Shi'ite community.

[14] "The Neoplatonic scheme of the inner ascent from the Many to the One. . . is ethical on the first rungs of the ladder, then theoretical, and at the culminating stage mystical" (Jonas, 1958, p. 61).

Part 2: Voices and Visions in the Temple of Darkness

Chapter 4

The *Nigredo*: The Lesser Work of the Ritual

As its etymology suggests, alchemy, noted Jungian author Jay Ramsay (2017), "begins in darkness" (p. 61). Out of this dark state, according to Edinger (1994a), "is born the theophany" (p. 172). How can this theophany, which psychologically means a visual/light experience of the numinosum in the dark, be viewed? Although Sufism metaphorically used the sense of "tasting" (*dhawq*) to experience the divine within, Shi'ism relies on the sensorium, or the mirror, and does not dismiss any human sense perception, inner or outer. In this section, I attempt to trace two ways (*tarīqah*) of experiencing the archetypal or suprasensory images of the *Alh al Bayt*: hearing and visualizing.

The exoteric discussion of the images is kept in mind to focus on the esoteric, the inner visions of Shi'ite theosophy, as projected aspects of the mystical imagination. First, however, I want to start with auditory renderings—*voices* coming from the darkness—the archetypal communication in the ritual ceremonies.

Auditory Imagination

Psychologically, sounds are "seen" as light, or as providing insights for understanding. How something is said is just as important than what is said. Sound perceptions provide nuanced information in communicating with the other. The unconscious speaks often in the language of the soul (*anima*). The reliance on these auditory phenomena, especially in *dhikr* ceremonies, is as important, if not more so, than visual phenomena for an experience of the numinous. Moreover, sounds on the outside

have frequencies, a degree of energy with colorful communication. This communication has a tonality in language, which has a nuanced meaning that only a living person can detect from the inside.

On the inside, the unconscious contents are excited in the ritual by *anamnesis* (recollection), and they are made manifest by equanimous musical recitations (*dhikr*), loud sermons (*khutbah*), and then a spiral frenzy of beating and cutting one's flesh (*mātam*). The voice of a powerful sermon, for instance, paints over the daily psychic habits of a person because sermons are thoughtfully crafted via exegesis (*tafsir*). They veil (*hijab*) the historical face, calm the daily ruckus, and open the imaginal and the metaphysical. Archetypal language of poetry leads believers to a drama, to the hermeneutics of soul. In other words, by the use of a "word-association" method (a technique used by Ibn Sina and Jung) and metaphors in the poetic recitations and sermons, Ashura complexes are triggered, which leads to a dimming of ego's subjectivity.

I think, from my observations, that these exoteric temple-sounds might *feel* dark even for a non-Shi'a person. When one experiences this phenomenon in the *imambargah* (Shi'a temples where the Ashura ritual takes stage physically), traces of echoes can be heard and felt even when *observing* silence. For Shi'a devotees, these places are sacred because, in their physical space, these temples contain haunted echoes of a metaphysical lament (*threnos*), a sense of sacred energy of suffering (*pathos*), leaving an uneasy apparition of the Karbala battlefield via human dramatization and imagination. This is the reason these locations are named after the main protagonists of the passion: *fatimiyyah*, *zaynabiyyah*, or *hussainiya*.

In this chapter, I discuss a depth psychological significance of Fatimah and Zaynab as historical feminine persons who have become, for Shi'a people, sophianic symbols of the Ashura ritual. These figures represent the soul (anima) of the work. My research has led me to the sophianic idea of divine Wisdom in gnosis, which is essential to outline, for the archetype of Sophia is the guiding principle of the ritual acts and hermeneutics of religious phenomena (Corbin, 1952/1985). The significance of Imam Hussain (Imamate or *walayah* vis-à-vis the prophecy) is discussed in chapter 6.

Fatimah *al-Zehra* (The Pure)

Most Sufi Shi'ite authors, after praising Allah and His perfection, immediately describe the beauty of the Prophet Muhammad (see Iraqi, 1982, for example). It is a customary belief that in the first theophany, before any trace of Adam was conceived, Muhammad's beauty was present with God, and then Ali and Imams followed in praise. In my literature review, I hardly encountered the role of Fatimah at the outset of a text. For most authors, she is a background figure.

A depth psychological interpretation of this could mean that she is omitted from the scene, or it could be that she is the director of the play. In the actual Ashura ritual ceremonies, I have seen both cases to be true. In its psychological sense, I therefore think that the ritual, on the one hand, begins not with Fatimah; it begins with remembering the evil dark forces of Yazid most deeply. In the dramatization of the tragedy of Karbala, Fatimah is not present. She is present only in spirit because the Shi'ite consciousness at the beginning of the ritual is foreshadowed by the historical events of the past, which is the remembrance of the Shi'ite/Sunni split (see McHugo, 2017). On the other hand, Fatimah comes in and out psychologically. As the Mercurius figure in alchemy, her

passive presence is within or *behind* every act (every behavior of the devotee in the dramatization). In the ritual, she is present as if behind a veil (*hijab*).

Mercury was known as the spirit metal in alchemy. It was responsible for transmutation, but also itself goes through transmutation. In the latter sense, it is passive. This element was responsible for extracting gold by attaching to it. In philosophical alchemy, "our" Mercury has comprised a mediator personality who sends informative messages between two persons. Mercury was the symbol of knowledge for the people and the gods. Haeffner (1991) explained the nature of Mercury as *prima materia*:

> Alchemy is the art of transformation and metamorphosis and it is Mercury, the spiritual messenger of the gods, the holder of the winged caduceus, who is most subject to metamorphosis, for he is in actual fact the essential symbol of every aspect of the opus, from its initial dragon *prima materia* to its culmination and fruition in the elixir, or the Stone, or *magisterium.* (p. 142)

What this means in the Ashura ritual is that because Fatimah represents the receptive ground of the work, the Shi'a believer's knowledge goes through a transformation, first taking in the dark, evil events that took place in Karbala and then coming to know them from the perspective of a higher eros, which is also a realization of *being* (with) Fatimah as well.

To understand the mediation of this archetype, of Fatimah, one must grasp what she means. In the sense of the mediator personality, I can now try to illustrate Fatimah as an archetypal power who stands between the Shi'ite consciousness and the "Friend of God," the objective reality of the Imam Consciousness (God-*image* in the Jungian sense).

By understanding the *bātini* or Eternal Form, however, it is important to keep in mind her *zāhiri*, her historical and creative reality.

The Ashura ceremonies begin with the sighting of the new moon on the evening before the first of Muharram. The mythology of the moon goes back to the ancient Greeks. But for us, only a few related correspondences of the moon symbolism vis-à-vis Fatimah are pertinent and sufficient from the literature review to understand her function. In particular, the crescent image of the moon reminds the Shi'a devotees of the sorrowful image of Fatimah, and they gather in the temple to unite not out of fear, but from love. Shi'as usually identified Fatimah as the welcoming initiator of the first stage of the ritual gatherings (*majlis*), which holds *marathi* or *marsia khani* and *noha khani* (poetic adorations, elegies, and liturgies).

Majlis is the container of collective energy. It pulls the individual participant toward the dark memories of the Karbala and beyond by way of *dhikr e Alh al Bayt* (vocalizing or uttering the names of the *Alh al Bayt*).

Dhikr is the uttering or mentioning of names in a devotional repetition. It is vocalizing the nature or state (*tabiya*, *hāl*) of the soul. The first thing noticed in the *majlis* ritual is that by uttering the names of *Ahl al Bayt* in *marsia khani,* the participants bring the images of the Karbala tragedy to mind. Along with Hussain and Zaynab, the name Fatimah by far holds the most feminine weight. She serves a powerful emotive function. Fatimah, in the ritualistic sense, "gives birth" to Hussain (reminds the adept of her son's martyrdom) in the imagination of the Shi'ite believers. Like the moon, her psychic radiance and creative power draw participants into the earthly events. Fatimah and her

sons pull the participants' psyche toward an archetypal exile, depression, loneliness, suffering, sacrifice, mourning, mutilation, killing, and death.

Just as Christians recall the heavenly Virgin Mary and of her son's suffering on earth along with those who handled his crucifixion, so, too, the trials of Fatimah and Hussain lead to redemption in the ritual. These terms—exile, depression, and so on—are related to one another and gravitate toward the *mortificatio* operations in alchemy (see cluster diagram in Edinger, 1994b, pp. 16, 146).

Alchemists often said: No generation without corruption (Ramsay, 2017), so death comes first before rebirth. Further, the Qur'an, too, noted, "He has power over everything—who created death and life" (Q: 67:2). Death comes before life in the Qur'anic text. Ramsay (2017) expressed the *nigredo* stage:

> The essence of *nigredo* is a blackening and a putrefying, which is why it is also referred to as *calcinatio* (*calcine*: "to burn") and *mortificatio* (literally, "to mortify"). It concerns primarily the death of the Old King or ego, which he symbolizes, and it takes place under Saturn, which . . . for earlier alchemists was the furthest planet from the sun. Saturn as a planet is associated with lead—the *nigredo* is the lead. Saturn is also associated with the intellect or mind [ego-consciousness], as well as with form and structure. (p. 61)

In terms of *nigredo,* Karbala is farthest from the sun, the light of daily consciousness, or the image of the "King" that Shi'as have developed since childhood; this is the ego-self that includes all the religious Shi'ite/Sunni divisions. One can see the blood and sweat,

weeping and beating, and flagellation of the body in the ritual as a symbolic death of the Shi'a participants, their "Kingness".

In the *nigredo*, as the ego's light diminishes, the new sun rises from the unconscious. It is the black sun (*sol niger*), the spirit or archetype of the unconscious, but first, the conscious state in which the black sun is to be reborn must be purified. In other words, for the archetypal forces to manifest in the believer's consciousness, the old cloudy way of thinking must be put to death,[15] and the mind must be cleansed. Here, the Shi'a devotees remove, and indeed should remove, all the rhetoric of religious hubris.

In alchemy, the *sol niger*, too, has two sides: a light side and a dark-evil side. I see this in Shi'ite clerics during *khutba,* or sermons, who often without realizing go over the top in ridiculing Sunni caliphs and Aisha (the Prophet's wife who fought a battle with Ali), this appears to be a lack of self-development and clergy education. Nevertheless, in the ritual sermons, Shi'ite clergymen (*zākir*, the one who does *dhikr*—pronounced *zikr*) and clergywomen (*zākira*) are trained (usually in Mashhad or Qom, Iran) to control their egoic manifestations and provide a cleansing and purifying agent. This agent is introduced in the *masiab* (troubled waters) portion of the *dhikr majlis e aza* (*aza* is short for *azadāri*, which means mourning). This agent comes not from any historical knowledge, logic, or some religious Qur'anic formula or supplication, although they all are capable of producing new growth. This agent is religious eros or love for the *Ahl al Bayt*.

Death does not mean the end of love. People need love more at a time of death or dying. The entire ritual of Ashura can be said to be degrees of expression of condolences

[15] The term "cloud" should not be taken as the imaginal (*'amā*), the primordial Cloud, the Womb.

to Fatimah in heaven. This means that, on the one hand, silence is observed, which transcends any verbal (auditory) transmission.

On the other hand, personal worship can be heard, which appears as the sound of the ritual, "a Hermetic *dhikr*" (Corbin, 1971/1978, p. 19). In the *majlis* setting, the names are spoken out loud, especially of Imam Ali ('Ya Ali, or *Haidari*), which causes the archetype of Ali to appear as if in the air. Ali's presence is felt in the room or hall in spirit (*sublimatio*). Similarly, Hussain is called up in all the ceremonies, but his name is preserved mostly for the mourning and flagellation rites, usually performed by men with a valor or warrior attitude.

The name Fatimah is a multivalent symbol. This name melts the heart of even the sternest warrior. She changes her role depending on the needs of the personal psyche of the believer. Her agony becomes the believer's agony. For instance, as the daughter, wife, and mother in the work, she becomes a mediator who lifts the veil of sheer melancholy to matters of personal relationships. The act becomes a self-cleansing process, a catharsis.

This process in the ritual is emptying one's personal issues. Mourning and weeping for *Ahl al Bayt* often at first assist the individual to mourn his or her personal problems of life. The Shi'a devotees starts thinking about or imagining their own losses or scenarios of family members, close friends, or even pets. Compared to the tragedy of Karbala, however, at bottom, the personal "stuff" is understood as imperfect transformation. Further *mortificatio* imagery is needed and duly exercised for the ego to lose its personal body. This act of imagination moves the devotee to the Abode of Fatimah alone.

In another sense, the Fatimah archetype ushers the Shi'ite consciousness from the personal to the transpersonal fire of the psyche by way of *dhikr*, a method that evokes auditory visions to a higher degree. This fire eventually cooks the ego to white ashes.

Fatimah's earthly death is often recalled. She survived the Prophet by only a few months on earth. During the Muharram *majalis* and on the Day of Ashura, the rites take place under her manifest presence of perfect nature *and* also under the auspices of the twelfth Imam. The Shi'a devotee encounters a secret love and experience in the darkness, his or her inner companion, as encountered in Jung's (1955-1956/1970a) comment:

> It is a state of someone who, in his wanderings among the mazes of his psychic transformation, comes upon a secret happiness which reconciles him to his apparent loneliness. In communing with himself he finds not deadly boredom and melancholy but an inner partner; more than that, a relationship that seems like the happiness of a secret love, or like a hidden springtime, when the green seed sprouts from the barren earth, holding out the promise of future harvests. It is the alchemical *benedicta viriditas*, the blessed greenness, signifying on the one hand the "leprosy of the metals" (*berdigris*), but on the other the secret immanence of the divine spirit of life in all things. (p. 432)

To me, this secret love holds positive and negative archetypal values in terms of Fatimah's reality. She does not represent the object of love. She *is* love.

Von Franz indicated in the *Corpus Alchemicum Arabicum* that Fatimah is identical to *anima coelestis*, "as a personification of the 'Eternal Sophia'. Corbin identifies this

figure with Jung's concept of the anima" (as cited in Ibn Umail, 2006, p. 23). Corbin (1952/1985) hypothesized:

> A sophianist consciousness suddenly reversed and fell prey to the Yahweh of Job; this tragedy has never yet been properly formulated in consciousness. And yet, there has also been a sort of Iranian voice giving an "Answer to Job." This answer is contained in the devoutness which took the form of Shi'ite Islam—Not only do the Holy Imams form a chain of helpful intermediary beings, but especially Fâtima, the Prophet's daughter and Mother of the Holy Imams, assumes a role which makes her a recurrence of Sophia—not only for popular piety but also for the theosophical speculations of Shi'ism. (p. 22)

Similarly, Jung (1937/1968e) quoted a Christian clerical treatise of the 14th century. This author's words are indistinguishable from a Shi'a experience of the Fatimah archetype in the Ashura ritual:

> All good things come to me together with her, that Wisdom of the south, . . . who uttereth her voice in the streets, crieth out at the head of the multitudes, and in the entrance of the gates of the city uttereth her words, say: "Come ye to me and be enlightened, and your operations shall not be confounded; all ye that desire me shall be filled with my riches. Come, children, hearken to me, I will teach you the science of God." (p. 377)

For this author, "Queen of the South" is the *Sapientia* (Jung, 1937/1968e, p. 378). Next is from the *Rosarium*:

> This Sapientia is my daughter, for whose sake men say that the Queen of the South came out of the east, like the rising dawn, in order to hear, understand, and behold the wisdom . . . she wears the royal crown of seven [or twelve in the original text] glittering stars . . . for her husband, and on her robe is written in golden lettering, in Greek, Arabic, and Latin: I am the only daughter of the wise. (Jung, 1937/1968e, p. 379)

In Arabic alchemy, "great south wind" refers to the heating of the retort. Abu'l Qasim spoke of the fire as the "great south wind" (Jung, 1937/1968a, p. 387). Corbin (1971/1978) described the inner relationship of the seeker:

> It is a relationship in which the mystical soul, as Maryam, as Fatima, becomes the "mother of her father," *omm abi-ha*. And this . . . is the meaning of the verse in Ibn al 'Arabi: "I created perception in Thee only that therein I might become the object of my perception." (p. 22)

To interpret and understand these statements, it is important to remember the Shi'ite notion of duality in the Oneness: *zāhir/mawjūd* (manifested existence) and *bātin/wujūd* (hidden being or nonexistence). This distinction of the One in the ritual delivers the believer an experience of the inner Fatimah, the suffering moon as the manifest *zuhūr*. Making this manifest presence of Fatimah's archetypal image in the mirror (the ritual, the vessel), the experiencer sees the projection of his or her archetype.

As a case in point, crying in the ritual is a sound phenomenon motivated by an inner Ashura complex. Some Sunni Muslims do not understand why Shi'as cry on the Day of Ashura. For Sunnis, this phenomenon seems to be a pathology of the mind, so they do not understand that this behavior is not the doing of those who cry. It is

archetypal. This crying is through the Mother who cries for her Son and Father. Shi'as participate in the Mother, they perceive they are becoming a mother, and they become the moon from which the light of the sun is received and seen. Devotees do not see Fatimah in everything. It is *seeing through her angelic light* that the ritual becomes fecund; therefore, as an archetype of fiery light, Fatimah unites in the perception, an agent of love through which a Shi'a believer operates in the ritual. This is what Ibn al 'Arabi meant by "I created perception in Thee only that therein I might become the object of my perception" (Corbin, 1971/1978, p. 22).

The Fatimah archetype is therefore positive and negative, a bi-unity, an intermediary being, a perspectival passivity as an activity. On the one hand, she is the eye from which Shi'as see the object of their divine perception, and on the other hand, she is the *pathos*, the death of one's own ego, which allows God to see the devotee's heart. The negative aspect of the archetype, however, does not mean that the believer integrates dark evil satanic forces with his or her angels. The dark aspects (alchemical slag, *Yazidiāt*) are to be realized, extracted, and seen by the new transformed consciousness and then set aside for further purification. Just as Mary, mother of Christ, honors her Christians every Sunday by attending Mass at the house of Ephesus, Fatimah's presence, the sophianic consciousness, is felt and understood in the Shi'ite temple, the *imambargah*. Through this sacred rite of *dhikr* and remembrance, which is imagined as happening in a *vas alembic* of the alchemist, Fatimah corresponds to the invisible guide, the feminine tutelary spirit, like the Persian Fravarti or *Daēnā*, emerging from the deeper paradisiacal, pleromatic divine existence (Corbin, 1952/1985). For this reason, in the Shi'ite imagination, Fatimah is:

> The Virgin-Mother . . . a goddess and stripped of her humanity. She will not conceive her Child in sin like other mothers, because this Child will also be a God, and a God cannot be conceived in sin. "Both Mother and Son are not really human beings, but gods." (p. 14)

Fatimah is the *anima* or soul of the Ashura ritual, and in the Jungian sense, a complex inner unconscious ("south wind") dynamic in the participant's psyche. She dispenses nourishment for the followers of Ali and mourners of her son. She represents the unconscious, the Archetypal Feminine, and the symbol of the Great Mother. Depth psychologically speaking, this research, therefore, shows that most of the *nigredo* ritual takes place and/or should proceed from her level.

Reenactment of Death and Rebirth in the Ritual

The first act of the *marsia khani* is a psychological preparation for a sacrifice. This sacrifice is not of Imam Hussain, for he is a living eternal symbol, the object of *walayah*, but the devotee's own *Yazidiāt* (ego's immoral nature, not its intellect). In essence, the Ashura ritual, in its reenactment of the death and rebirth of Hussain, is chiefly concerned with the phenomenon of good and evil. The aim is to recognize that Hussain fought evil and embraced goodness and truth. In the ritual, a person must recognize his or her own *Yazidiāt*, his or her own shadow, and he or she must go through it in the darkness to find his or her own truth. This is the truth send to the Prophet.

In the Ashura ritual, the believers are being primed as *prima materia* to mourn and "die" for the *Ahl al Bayt*. Intrapsychically, this means that they are to kill their black matter, their *nafs ammara*, typified as egoic desires or the so-called worldly "pursuit of happiness." It is this rigid attitude, indeed, that "dies" first in the ritual in order to proceed

to the deeper drama. It must be killed in the ritual punishment, not so much to be externalized in the ritual, but to give room for the archetypal figures to move in through mytho-poetic elegies. For example, in the ritual, a devotee bows his or her head in reverence when Fatimah's name is mentioned. It is a gesture of veiling (*hijab*) in the presence of *panjathan pak* or *Ahl al Bayt*. Believers are often reminded in the *majlis* sermons that even the Prophet stood up and addressed Fatimah in reverence when she entered the mosque.

How does this worldly mind die in the ritual?

In the *majlis* elegies, I have witnessed and heard poems that tell Fatimah's stories (*bibi ki kahāni* in Urdu). Putting aside mythologized tales talked about her, for they are many and lengthy, I interject one or two historical facts, which are just as powerful for blackening, activating the collective unconscious in the Shi'ite mind. Fatimah's death in the ritual, for instance, symbolizes the death of matriarchal consciousness—a mournful image par excellence for Shi'a Muslims. The Ashura ritual's poems and sermons talk about *Yazidiāt*, the immoral image of Yazid. The latter's image is projected to characterize earlier caliphs who suppressed the rights of the *Alh al Bayt*.

For instance, Shi'a priests often speak of Abu Bakr's neglect toward Fatimah after the Prophet's death. It has been said more than once in Shi'a *majālis*, that Fatimah was not the same after the Prophet's death. The walls of the temple continue to echo songs of her qualities and purity that superseded even Ali, although his "face" (*wajah*) is considered by Shi'as to be worthy of worship. With a guilty conscience, the Shi'a devotees in the Ashura ritual speak of Fatimah's grief and misery as if their own. Fatimah was so heartbroken by her father's death that until the day she died, they say, her "house

of sorrow" (her maids and other women) wore black clothing. Some say that her love and grief for her father's death separated her from the community and, in the end, killed her.

'O Fatimah, we sympathize with you, the queen of Paradise, Shi'a women and men often lament. In the ritual, the women especially participate with the imaginal "house of sorrow." The men, however, are not allowed to enter Fatimah's [imaginal] house; they remain outside with their heads down in respect. They guard the door of her house, for it was this door, the story goes, that led to her death.

A few days after the Prophet's death, Umar, a military man and the second caliph of Islam, was the stern commander of a Muslim army after Abu Bakr, and he wanted Ali to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr. Looking for Ali, Umar threatened to kill and standing with his men outside the door of Fatimah's house, shouted, "Ali should come out and pledge to Abu Bakr" (Hazleton, 2009). Hazleton described what happened next:

> Short of actually following through on his threat and killing all of Muhammad's closest family, Omar [Umar] was left, as he saw it, with only one option. If Ali would not come out, then he, Omar, would have to force his way in. He took a running leap and threw his whole weight against the door, and when the latches and hinges gave and it burst open, all six feet of him came hurtling through, unable to stop as he slammed full force into the person who happened to be on the other side of the door at that moment. That person was Fatima, several months pregnant with the Prophet's third grandson. (p. 72)

Fatimah died shortly after giving birth to a stillborn son. She was about 18 years old and was buried in a place of *Janat al baqi'* (a barren and dry cemetery in Medina adjacent to

the massive mausoleum of the Prophet and the first two caliphs; it means Eternal Paradise). Shi'ite efforts to restore this place to build a proper shrine have been unsuccessful to date. In fact, projects have been initiated to demolish her resting place. On the Day of Ashura, mourners still gather to commemorate. Perhaps in compensation for this phenomenon, Shi'a Muslims have two shrines for Fatimah's daughter, Zaynab (*al Kubra*, the Great). One is in Damascus; the other is in Cairo.

In my experience at the Zaynab shrine in Cairo, I saw the visiting believers bring forward the archetypal images of *mortificatio*, as they mourned and cried often with a piece of cloth or white paper in their hands. They slapped their chest and head. They asked forgiveness. In reverence, they supplicated and remembered the sermon she gave in the court of Yazid. This historical fact is a memory, general knowledge not only of the Karbala events, but also a memory of Fatimah as she faced and disputed with Abu Bakr, the first caliph. Shi'as often recall that after the Prophet's death, Abu Bakr denied Fatimah's inheritance. It was over a garden oasis (*Fadak*), left by the Prophet to his daughter Fatimah. Abu Bakr said: "We do not have heirs . . . whatever we leave is alms [to the community]" (Hazleton, 2009, p. 72).

After the Prophet's death, Ali was denied his inheritance of successorship to the Prophet's office, and Fatimah was cheated out of her property. Shi'a Muslims understand this to be a manifestation of long jealousy and rivalry of tribal warfare between the Hashemites and the Umayyad clan in Arabia that resurfaced again after the Prophet's death. Sunnis agree with Abu Bakr that the Muslim community comes first, not the Prophet's family. In this, Shi'a Muslims disagree strongly. For them, just as the Qur'an has more value than any book, Fatimah should be appreciated more than any other

woman in regard to piety. The Ashura ritual reminds devotees of these valuable sentiments every year as if to increase the fire of torment, to constellate the "radical moisture" of the anima archetype (Jung, 1954/1967f, pp. 67–68).

In the Ashura ritual, Fatimah is a living symbol. She becomes the personified anima that emerges from its veiled and poor existence to the devotee's soul. Although she promotes new growth, love, beauty, radiance, and patience in the believer, she is the old lover of her "sons." Fatimah is imagined in the ritual from the inside, and she is imagination perceived from the outside. She is the virgin wife, the pure mother who receives Imam's light in her womb.

The mother's love (*muhaba*) spills out of the cup, as it were, when the Fatimah archetype enters the lover's field of consciousness during the mourning processes of the Ashura ritual. In the poetic rites of *marsia khani* and *noha khani*, devotees hear moving recitations by experts in the field of this art. They sing and lament the beauty in misery, the heartbreaking despair of Fatimah, which takes them to do the inner *ziarāh* (pilgrimage).

In my active imagination, she cries this spiritual love (*hibb rūhani*), "*If you want to grieve with me, then come patiently to Karbala and meet the Shi'as with their angels. Let this love be an offering for and from the Ahl al Bayt*." This love, as I see it, is not a desire of the ego; it is, as Ibn al 'Arabi's stated, "in the creature, a love which has no other concern, aim, or will than to be adequate to the Beloved" (Corbin, 1958/1969, p. 149). As a spiritual lover, a true Shi'a's devotional sympathy is contingent upon his imagination and suffering power. This mystical love is that which separates (*separatio*) the bodily appetites, like the Mercurius of the Artifex, and it is also that which unites

(*coniunctio*) heart's affections with the world of the physical *and* the spiritual (Corbin, 1958/1969).

Fatimah loves those who love her sons—her created lights, whom she created, to whom she gave birth through uniting with the *logos* principle, represented by Ali, the Imam par excellence. According to the Shi'ite belief, a mother does not love those who do not love her children. I agree because she is the "*mensura*" who measures (Edinger, 1995, p. 112). She loves Shi'as who weep with her in Heaven because psychologically, as the Urdu saying goes, *mehbub ka mehboob mehbub hota he*—a lover's beloved's Beloved is the lover's Beloved. This saying in Shi'ite prose is for the love of *Ahl al Bayt* (Professor Abdul Hakeem Buturabi, personal communication, February 2008). The idea is that only the family member closest to the heart and blood of a person tears up when separated upon death. This is an empirical reason for my proposition that the Fatimah archetype, acting through the archetypal complex of the Ashura ritual, lifts the devotee's soul out of his or her body. This is the operation of the *separatio*, signifying the Lesser work of alchemy.

This could also parallel the idea that Fatimah in the Ashura work is like the *soror mystica*, an assistant and a psychopomp with a healing, regenerative principle for the believer's soul to rise to the spirit, carrying the radiating "water" or "dew" of the moon for the process of individuation. This "water," or *aqua regia,* is a noetic spirit of the mind (Jung, 1955–1956/1970a). It points to the creative aspect of the *logos* in a woman. Depth psychologically, this concept can translate to mean that the image of Fatimah is that archetypal energy, or the supraconsciousness of the collective unconscious activated in the ritual by the believer's psyche. She transforms the quality of the believer's

knowledge of his or her ego-personality to a more subtle way of perceiving, but she also stands close to the personal unconscious. She sits with those in sorrow, dedicated to the *opus*. She suffers with them. She is the earth (*materia*) of the moon, for the moon was considered to be made by earth (Jung, 1937/1968e). Fatimah is therefore the Luna of alchemy, who shifts perspectives.

I want to relate a famous tale of Fatimah, which is often told to children in the Ashura ritual, and links to what has been revealed so far:

> One day, The Prophet sent Salman, the Persian, [to Fatimah] seeking food for the hungry man [who converted to Islam]. She had nothing but her own clothes, so she sent her cloak to be pawned with Simon the Jew for a bushel of barley and a tray of dates. She baked the barley, after grinding it with her own hands, and sent the bread and dates to feed the new Muslim. With joy the Prophet came to her, but found her pale with hunger and her two children, Hassan and Husayn, asleep, trembling like slaughtered birds, from hunger as no one in the house of Ali had tasted anything for three days. The Prophet saw this and his eyes were filled with tears, and he did not know what to do. . . . Fatimah then entered her chamber and prayed, . . . after which she invoked God saying, "O Lord, send to us a banquet (*mā'idah*) from heaven as Thou hadst sent it to the children of Israel. They disbelieved it, yet will we be in it believers." As she finished her prayer, a banquet was sent from heaven and they all ate. The Prophet, with joy and gratitude, exclaimed, "Thanks be to God who had granted me a child-like Mary who, . . . whenever Zechariah went in to her in the

> Sanctuary, he found her provisioned." "Mary," he said, "How comes this to thee?" "From God," she said. (Ayoub, 1978, p. 241)

Such tales are necessary to understand the Prophet's family and their role in a cosmological scheme. They help their followers understand that Ali and Fatimah were not prosperous in riches and wealth. They were poor in worldly things. Ali, for instance, had to sell his sword and shield to have enough money for Fatimah's dowry (Hazleton, 2009). In contrast, rich spiritual visions of Fatimah and other members of the Prophet's Household are common among Shi'a believers. Fatimah often comes in dreams to the pious who are in need. She gives a secret substance of life, for Fatimah's dowry was given by God, according to the belief. The dowry was the heavens, the earth, and everything in between, and God Himself was a witness to her wedding to Ali.

The Heavenly Mother-image is essential for the Ashura ritual, symbolizing kindness and protectiveness of her children, the Shi'ite community. Unlike the saintly symbol of mother Teresa in the modern sense who devoted her life for the sick and poor, another side is evident in the mother archetype. It is symbolized by the dark side of the moon. Expressed symbolically by *The Hades Moon*, astrologer Judy Hall (1998) observed: "This is the archetypal Demeter Earth Mother who will not let go of her child" (p. 261). She has a possessive nature. Although Hall described motherhood with the attitude of "she who must be obeyed," in the alchemical sense, Fatimah is love; that is, she is that aspect of the unconscious that resides deep within the darkness of bitter salt. This is the divine love embedded deeply within the Shi'a mind. Even though they feel resentful against the killers of Hussain, Shi'as embody this evil knowing by transmuting it into loving the *Alh al Bayt* in every tear and every drop of blood they spill, the very

existential substance of their bodies. This can be seen as the woman's love, the Athene light for her family, that fights the demonic darkness.

In this description of Fatimah's role in the Ashura ritual, the alchemical idea of the divine water (gnosis) embedded in the darkness of matter extends in correspondence with the Islamic idea of *tashbih* in all the heavenly bodies. This water is the inner tears when cooked in the emotional fire of the Karbala imagery; therefore, the believer *as* the *prima materia* of the ritual is in the vessel, on fire, where his or her tears correspond to the distilled heated water of the alchemist in the *solutio*.

Thus far, the *mortificatio* operation of alchemy in the *nigredo* stage of the Ashura ritual connects other operations such as *sublimatio* and *solutio*. Alchemy stages are more readily explained than are the Shi'ite stages of mourning in the ceremonies of the ritual, for an objective and subjective situation appears in each rite. Jung (1954/1969b) offered some guidance: "The symbol always covers a complicated situation which is so far beyond the grasp of language that it cannot be expressed at all in any unambiguous manner" (p. 254).

At this stage of the work, my analysis is that the ego of Shi'a participants, as the ruling principle of consciousness, goes through transformation by way of torment as an outcome of the Ashura ritual. However, the ego does not suffer alone, as it is accompanied by the Fatimah archetype. She is a fiery aspect in the psyche that *stands under* consciousness and "cooks" all the ego-contents above. The ego receives her heat, or the mother's wisdom, in this process, and the body of the ego suffers by separating the evil shadowy dark coverings to ashes—to the bone. A new consciousness emerges from within that is linked with the archetypal force, her fire. The archetypal psyche replaces

the ego in a way that the individual experiences beyond bi-unity, a sort of union, for the person feels the presence of Fatimah, but only for a certain period of time in the ritual.

Alchemical explanation of this is that the blackness of lead consciousness turns to silver (the *albedo*, becoming one with the Fatimah archetype). From the darkness, a new light is born without fear or animosity. This light is connected with love. A type of tranquility is present in the Ashura ritual that can be felt. This calmness is like light-heartedness; it is the highest, most wonderful achievement in the eyes of God, or a feeling of received *sawab* (merit) in Shi'ism.

This *sawab* certainly suggests that the ego, as in Jungian psychology, is not lost in the Ashura ritual. Even this new transformed ego corresponds to a body of pride for the Shi'a believers. There is a sense that even this emeritus status, this newly achieved excellence of superiority of the ego, still amounts to nothing but hubris. It is dangerous for mature participants, and outright undeserved, when the memories of Imam Hussain's martyrdom are repeatedly mentioned in the *mātam* and bloodletting ceremonies. In the *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Jung (1955–1956/1970a) offered a passage in the voice of this ego. For me, it reads slowly, as if the pitch of the sound is lowered:

> I am an infirm and weak old man, surnamed the dragon; therefore am I shut up in a cave, that I may be ransomed by the kingly crown. . . . A fiery sword inflicts great torments upon me; death makes weak my flesh and bones. . . . My soul and my spirit depart; a terrible poison, I am likened to the black raven, for that is the wages of sin; in dust and earth I lie, that out of Three may come One. O soul and spirit, leave me not, that I may see

> again the light of day, and the hero of peace whom the whole world shall behold may arise from me. (p. 515)

In this sense, the alone ego becomes like a child again. All alone with himself in the cave of his own darkness, Jung in this passage describes the ego as a king holding his crown without a soul, without spirit. Its inflatedness or kingliness is therefore sacrificed, but the ego itself should not be sacrificed in the Ashura ritual because it needs parental care again. To be developed, to be reborn, he needs his Mother and Father.

In depth psychology, the ego is a complex. It has an archetypal core, that divine immortal spark needing redemption or actualization from its potentiality. Everyone has the potential to be a mother and/or a father; however, it is important to put oneself in the child's position or the "weak old man." The Ashura ritual provides this reminder: The ego's meeting with Fatimah, the Mother, is the key for realized love and care for and by the *Ahl al Bayt*, the Prophet, and the Imam. The symbolism intrapsychically points to the devotee's ego as the earthly sun, and Fatimah as the celestial moon. The moon stands between the sun of the believer and the Divine Sun, which represents the Imam.

In alchemical terms, in the ritual, Fatimah and the Shi'a devotee have a fiery interaction at this stage of the work, or "intercourse" to produce the philosopher's son (*filius philosophorum*), an innocent child (*masūm*). This child ego is then primed and ready for the *Hussainiāt* (Hussain consciousness). In Shi'ite thought, people cannot understand Imamology if they do not understand Fatimah.

In short, Fatimah is the one who tortures the believer's old ego-consciousness and kills it. The believer is in her grip, as it were, a sort of archetypal possession where, in a devoted state, the believer suffers. The heart mourns for two reasons: (a) letting go of the

personal and (b) being united with the transpersonal. This new state of consciousness is paradoxical, however; it is not new, but old. Here it symbolizes the child archetype, the undifferentiated state of consciousness. It is a childhood state of purity and innocence that must be tormented and "killed" again—that is, be sacrificed in madness and frenzy, a chaotic state in the second *nigredo* of the Ashura ritual, out of which "is born the theophany of transformation," the Divine Sun (Edinger, 1994a, p. 172). In later stages of the ritual, this vulnerable state of the child is tormented so powerfully by acts of evil that it finds itself in bewilderment.

Zaynab *al Kubra* (The Great)

Zaynab, the daughter of Ali and Fatimah, takes on a special role in Shi'ite history. In many Shi'ite elegies, it is Zaynab who takes on the archetypal (Mercurius) role of Fatimah, her mother's earthly and archetypal character. As a result, Zaynab becomes the second courageous female in the ritual.

Typically, biological sisters take on the responsibility of the mother's role in a family, especially after the mother dies. This is an instinctual maternal attribute activated when the mother of a family passes away. In the Karbala narrative, Zaynab was the one who faced Yazid in his court while Hussain's head was displayed on a spike. It is said that she delivered a defiant *khutba* (sermon). She exposed Yazid and his army's crimes that carried enduring consequences. After she humiliated Yazid, she was the one who wanted justice and order from the black chaos that took place in Karbala. Zaynab accomplished this by setting up the first Ashura rites. In the Ashura ritual, therefore, two mothers are personifying the anima archetype. Ayoub (1978) reported:

> As every activity of the Ashura period must be in some way related to the Holy Family and, more specifically, to the event of Karbala, the pious find much edification and symbolism even in this holy repast. A woman once related that as she and other women of the house were busy preparing the *Ashura harīsah*, as this dish is called, a venerable old woman came to help. She was invited to stay and share the food, but she declined, saying, "Would I eat food prepared for the soul of my brother Husayn?" The woman, of course, was Zaynab, the sorrowful sister of the martyred Imam. (p. 158)

Shi'ite texts give many examples of this kind about Zaynab's archetypal role in the Ashura ritual. She was the daughter of Ali and Fatimah. She witnessed the martyrdom of her brothers, Abbas and Hussain. She saw her nephews murdered. She witnessed her own young children murdered: Ali, Aun, and Muhammad, who was only 13 years old. Her heart was the first heart that was torn to pieces as she waited barefoot on the plains of Karbala.

According to Al-Majlisi (2014) and the sober tellings of the ritual, Zaynab waited for her sons to come back to the camp. She waited for her brother to bring some water. She waited for the men clutching swords to stop. She waited for the man to stop from taking off her brother's head from his body. She waited patiently with a broken heart. She waited as she screamed at the "animals" who sought women. Once again, Shi'ites are stricken with grief as they imagine her patience as men slapped little girls and pulled jewelry from their ears. Little girls were running to find their fathers on the hot plains of Karbala.

It was Zaynab, along with the sky, earth, and everything in between, who wept and waited for this dark day to see light. She waited for some goodness to spark in the hearts of those so-called Muslim men who murdered and tortured the Prophet's family. No divine intervention occurred that day. On the Day of Ashura, evil prevailed. Or did it? Shi' a Muslims say the only thing that prevailed was the soul.

In Shi'ism, Zaynab represents a great symbol of patience (*sabr*). She represents the act of crying and weeping. This human behavior is the most archetypal act of the soul. Those who did not cry and condemn the act as blasphemy against God were said to be the enemy of the Shi'ite people, according to a hadith of the sixth Imam (Al-Majlisi, 2014).

Another story describes Ali prophesying Hussain's murder to some companions: "I see the beasts stretching their necks over his grave of all kinds weeping and wailing for him until morning. When this happens, then you must remain on your guard against oppression" (Al-Majlisi, 2014, p. 468). It has been reported that lamentations of *Djinns* were heard when Zaynab, women, and children were being transported to Damascus:

> O the ones who have murdered al-Husayn, 'alayhi al-Salam, in ignorance, expect receiving news of your being punished and tortured, all the inhabitants of the sky pray against you, of the messenger Prophets and those being murdered, you are condemned by the tongue of Dawud (David), Musa (Moses) and the companion of al-Injil (the Bible) . . . . What will you say if the Holy Prophet will ask you, "What did you do, being the last nation (followers), to my Ahl al-Bayt, my brothers and to my honor; who were made captives, murdered and stained them in their blood?" (p. 511)

In another account, Ayoub (1978) told the story of Hussain's daughter after the women and children were taken to Damascus. It is possible to imagine for a second or two being with thousands of Shi'a devotees sitting on the ground barefoot amid a poetic sermon, listening and traversing to the following story told by a crying man.

> Husayn, according to the old tradition, had a young 3- or 4-year-old daughter named Ruqayyah. When the captives were brought to Yazid, Ruqayyah wept incessantly, asking for her father. One night, she dreamed of him and woke up utterly distraught with grief for his absence. Yazid ordered that Ruqayyah's father's head be brought to her so she might look at it and be consoled. The young girl took the head to her bosom and cried out with bitter tears: "O father, who did bathe you in your blood! O father, who did sever your jugular vein! O father, who made me an orphan when I am still a child! Who is left for us after you; who shall succor a young orphan girl until she grows up? . . . O father, who shall care for the widows after you. . . . Lost without you are these tearful eyes of the women. Terrible without you, O father, is our despair and captivity. Would that I could have been a ransom for you. Would that I was blind and could not see your grey head stained with your blood." (p. 159)

According to legend, the little girl pressed her lips to the dead mouth and died.

In the month of Muharram, blackness is a cosmological and political event. For this Ashura ritual, all beings come together with remembrances of Fatimah and Zaynab. Mother and daughter are not different in the psychological sense. The archetype in the ritual reminds the adept of a feminine sacrifice. The archetype is a concretized memory in

the Shi'ite mind. Not only is the Shi'ite ego alerted by the motherly reminder of her son's murder, but she also reminds, like the moon of Muharram, about feminine spirituality, a mother-daughter-wife motif. She acts on behalf of the believer as a psychopomp in the process of individuation.

In a man's psyche, this mother-daughter archetype is like an angel who belongs to both light and dark worlds. She first pulls him into darkness. The whole of the psyche is confused in the *majlis* ceremonies because not only is the believer's rational state disturbed by the Karbala images and the aftermath in Yazid's court, but the ground of his soul is also affected by the moon's reminder, of *her* suffering in *his* unconscious.

Like the moon, the mother-daughter archetype also brings fiery light into the confused, chaotic, and depressed state of consciousness. She burns the body, giving life and movement again. A person is reborn, which gives rise to the white ash that signifies the *albedo* stage. Paradoxically, it is pain that makes people move toward the direction of suffering. How does she, as the soul-medium of the ritual, give transformed life to the adepts? This question leads to the reality of Luna in alchemy.

Chapter 5

The *Albedo*: The Lesser Work of the Ritual

> The end product of *calcinatio* is a white ash. This corresponds to the so-called "white foliated earth" of many alchemical texts. It signifies the albedo or whitening phase and has a paradoxical association. On the one hand ashes signify despair, mourning, or repentance. On the other hand they contain the supreme value, the goal of the work. (Edinger, 1994a, p. 40)

Luna's Visionary Function

This chapter begins with the alchemical concept of Luna and its symbolic relationship to Sol in the Ashura ritual. In this process, although I have already hinted at the paradoxical nature of the Fatimah archetype, how the alchemical Luna leads the participants of the ritual to the *albedo*, the end of the Lesser work, can be understood.

In *Mysterium Coniunctionis,* Jung (1955–1956/1970a) quoted philosopher Albertus Magnus: "Together with Mercurius, Luna sprinkles the dismembered dragon with her moisture and brings him to life again, 'makes him live, walk, and run about, and change his colour to the nature of blood'" (p. 132). Psychologically, this dragon appears to be the believers' ego, and Fatimah/Zaynab is the personified archetype of the anima or soul, who acts as the mirror of the Shi'ite psyche. She is positioned between the unconscious and ego-consciousness as a gateway.

The passage above says Luna is *with* Mercurius. This is because, here, psychologically, Luna represents the vision in her darkness. Representing the divine Sun, she, as the moon's phases do, contains 14 phases or faces of light at night. This relates to

Twelver definition of *masūmeen* (without sin or error). These *masūmeen* are 14 archetypal figures: 12 Imams, Fatimah, and the Prophet Muhammad. Corbin (2006) rightly interprets (agreeing with Haydar Amuli) that all fourteen symbolize the term Imam in the sense of infallibility (*ismat*). They are "the 'Fourteen Immaculate Ones', the Fourteen Aeons of light of the Haqiqah Muhammadiyah" (Corbin, 1986, p. 110).

The religio-philosophical lens sees Luna as the Universal Soul, *Anima Mundi*. In her primordial form, she unites spirit and body, *rūh* and *jism*, Sun and Earth. In this sense, she is with the spirit, just as she is with the body. According to Ikhwān al-Safã, Brethren of Pure Heart, she is associated with the number 3 archetype in the Pythagorean sense, or third in the hierarchy of Being, between the universal Intellect and *hylé* (matter without form) (Nasr, 1995, p. 52 [note 29], Nasr, 2000, pp. 166-174). Psychologically, Jung would place her in the third stage of the Eros cult, representing the "spiritualization of Helen" (Jung, 1946/1966c, p. 174), that is to say, her ability is to disturb, as Mary, and pull the Helen consciousness toward her religious nature—not her Hawwah or primordial Eve nature of sex and reproduction—so she can show the numinous aspect she carries within her. For she is also the Great Mother, Sapientia, Wisdom, Sophia.

Zaynab, in the Shi'ite mind, is (or corresponds as) a projected personality of the anima, with the archetypal attribution of Fatimah in the Ashura ritual because, she, as angel-person of the God-image, in the alchemical category of salt (bitter wisdom), receives the sufferings, the function of *feeling*, and like Luna, bestows a cosmic illumination of the spirit she carries in her womb. She is not only light or consciousness, but she is also the earth, *materia* of the devotees' psyche. Unlike the sun's energy, whose spirit is pure light without corporeal nature, this Luna consciousness has the qualities of

earth and water, which make coldness. She is light in the darkness, in touch with the red sulphur or inner drives because she is also warm, between fire and air. This translates psychologically to her having a will, a bi-directional autonomy in the devotee's psyche. In short, this translates to sublimation or spiritualization of attitude leading to the Imam, because the goal for the Eros is to unite with her Logos, the king in the ritual.

At this point, though I will discuss Imamology in chapter 6, I want to say something about the term 'Imam'. This will serve us what is to follow. Imam in Shi'ism is the inner reality of not only all the prophets but also mankind (*adamiyah*), the Self archetype, or the God-*image* in the Jungian sense. This Self is considered being one archetype corresponding to the wholeness of the psyche, the image of God. But it is also considered, for Jung, from a human point of view, the center or the ordering principle of the psyche. In Shi'ism, Imam (with the capital I) is one. It is the same reality as Jung understood the totality of the personality. And so, there are many aspects to its manifestations. It could be understood "as the [inner] light of the Sun and the Moon, which guides the eyes of creatures along the ways of the visible world" (Corbin, 1986, p. 110).

The idea is that there are many imam figures in history that came after each prophet (12 in total, fulfilling the Muhammadan cycle) carrying a specific archetypal energy, light or consciousness, just as each prophet in Islam manifested a particular Name of God (Ibn al 'Arabi, 1980). In Islam, because the Prophet Muhammad holds a cumulative position of prophecy, an integrative singularity of all the prophets that came before him, "he is the most perfect creation of mankind, the Prophet of prophets, for which reason the whole affair [of creation] begins and ends with him" (Ibn al 'Arabi,

1980, p. 272). For Ibn al ‘Arabi, Muhammad is considered the Seal of prophets. However, he says that the Seal of the Imamate has two aspects: 1) the universal Imam, which he assigned to Jesus, and 2) the particular Imam, which he and his followers assigned to Ibn al ‘Arabi himself. Shi’a scholars, such as Haydar Amuli, disagree with this interpretation. For Amuli, the universal Seal of the Imam is Ali ibn abu Talib, and the particular Seal of the Imam is the twelfth Imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi ibn Hassan al-Askari (Corbin, 2006).

All prophets and Imams that came before Muhammad—the Prophet and Messenger of God—carried an aspect of the latter’s inner reality (*haqiqah*). In Shi’ite teachings in the form of *hadith* of Imams that come to us by Al-Kulayni ar-Razi (d. 941), a prophet (*nabi*) is who can hear and see the angel while asleep, but not while awake. A messenger (*rasūl*) is who can see and hear the angel in both sleep state and waking state. The Prophet Muhammad was both a *nabi* and *rasūl* in one person. An Imam is who can hear the angel’s voice but can not see the angel, whether asleep or awake. Al-Kulayni ar-Razi does not offer us any depth psychological explanation of why an Imam can not see the angel. We shall explore this further. For here, we should note that psychologically we can say that this inner aspect of the Prophet is the prophetic gaze on his own *Imama*, the object of his perfection, his *walayah*, which the pleroma of his existence (see Figure 13). This is why Imams that came after the Prophet Muhammad also held the transcendent function of the Prophet’s realized Self archetype, holding within them the prophetic bi-unity of outer and inner, *tawhid* or wholeness in its totality, holding the double aspect of the masculine and the feminine qualities.

Von Franz (1980) explains this perspective depth psychologically:

> The problem is whether there are many archetypes or if the archetype of the Self is really the one archetype. For instance, when someone is dominated by the mother archetype, one speaks of a mother complex, but if we go into that it will always be found that the whole Self is in it. An archetypal complex always leads to the symbol of the Self. So here again there is a secret monotheism in polytheism, whether the stress is on the one or the other. If the many points to the one, I would say that in the unconscious there is a tendency towards putting all the energy onto the Self and away from the different single archetypes. The many archetypes tend to concentrate round the one archetype, which you could say mirrors the tendency in the unconscious itself towards greater consciousness. (p. 120)

A few more amplifications do not exhaust the inquiry into the Fatimah archetype; they are necessary for understanding her position with the Self archetype or the reality of the Imam. The terrestrial phenomenon of the moon, the substance of the psychic *materia*, is most notable in the increase and decrease of "meteorology of Luna," who stands counter—yet as Divine Wisdom—to pure spirit (Jung, 1955–1956/1970a). In other words, Jung continues to say that she "is the counterpart of Sol, cold, moist, feeble shining or dark, feminine, corporeal, passive. Accordingly, her most significant role is that of a partner in the *coniunctio*. As a feminine deity, her radiance is mild; she is the lover" (p. 129). For Shi'a Sufis, this translates to mean that she is the *thou* in you, the longing lover, the celestial lofty treasure, "the essential and sacrosanct *Wisdom* [manifest as "apparitional Figure" (*sūrat mithālīya*) of *Sophia aeterna*]" who longed to be known

(Corbin, 1958/1969, pp. 121, 139). In Shi'ite cosmology, she seems to symbolize the face of the imagination, as she might be the screen on which divine projections manifest. However, Luna is not only the screen-mirror that receives light, but she is also the seer of the light, the spectator from which paradoxically, the divine sees Himself and his creatures moving in the *vera imaginatio*. Jung (1955–1956/1970a) further observed in alchemical texts that,

> [Luna] is the sister and bride, mother and spouse of the sun . . . it is said that the "moisture of the moon" (*lunaris humor*) takes up the sunlight, or that Luna draws near to the sun in order to extract from him, as from a fountain, universal form and natural life. (pp. 129–130)

Jung's passage can have two meanings depending on which sun is being talked about. If the sun is corporeal ego-consciousness, the rational spirit of mankind, then Luna would be a mother or a spirit possessor who communicates irrational thoughts to the ego being possessed by her. On the other hand, if the sun is the unconscious Self, then Luna would be the spouse, drawing symbolic images from the God of thought and relaying them to awareness without the "I" ever knowing of the process. Luna draws life from both sides of her bi-unity: human and divine, outer and inner.

On the practical level, for Muslims, the Holy Qur'an is the word of God. Hence it is considered being sacred and good. However, suppose a person steals the book from a mosque and starts reading. The more one reads, in this situation, the more one will not benefit. The text for this person overturns to a moral dilemma, perhaps evil. Because he or she will project her own interpretation into the meaning of the text, which comes from a deeper place of a guilty conscience. So, we can therefore see the dark side of the text as

a *voice* that lay within it, rising as a perspective, yet unseen. Just as the sun gives us nourishment and life, it can also burn and destroy. We shall come back to this example again below, but the Qur'an seen from the Luna aspect is the Mother of all texts carrying within the divine wisdom. She gives God's light according to the reader's situation, intention, and perspective. One person can read the text literally, word for word, or the exterior of the body. Another person can go deeper and read between the lines.

Al-Birūni (d. 1048–1050 CE), an Iranian polymath, explained: "The blood during the increase of moonlight runs from the interior of the body towards the outer parts, whilst during its decrease it sinks back into the interior of the body" (Nasr, 1993, p. 162). Bloody life, in the sense of our ritual, is activated by this archetype. As a lover, the moon of Muharram is a heavenly star. But at the same time closest to the body. Personified as Fatimah or Zaynab, she is the feminine in the ritual who pulls out the Shi'a emotions, the fire living within. The participants intertwine these emotions as Ashura complexes.

Although al-Birūni did not link alchemy to his astrology, other Sufi Hermetics like Ibn al 'Arabi did (Nasr, 1993). Luna's planetary position for Shi'ite alchemists such as Senior is between the sun and the earth. But we should understand that for Shi'ite alchemists, the earth here is also another star, another sun. Looked at from another view, Fatimah is the daughter or seed of the Prophet Muhammad; therefore, she as a potential in him parallels the divine wisdom that was given to the world. I believe Shi'a Muslims have knowledge of this sophianic wisdom because they achieved it through "knowledge learnt and suffered through experience" (Ramsay, 2017, p. 8). It is not just theorization or psychologization. In Islamic cosmology, Luna as cosmic *memory* (emphasis added) is seen in her 28-day wheel (a menstruation cycle) that integrates the whole of the cosmos

and becomes “the symbol of the Universal Man who is himself the archetype of the Universe. It is in this perspective that certain Sufis have identified the Moon with the Prophet” (Nasr, 1993, p. 163). The Prophet himself had split the moon in two with his finger, according to Islamic reference (Q. 54:1–2), a mysterious miracle that is reminiscent of the image of Moses splitting the Red Sea in two. This points to two aspects of the “water” image Luna gives to the adepts in the work: knowledge (*logos*) and love (*eros*).

Luna represents the psychological moon, not the literal moon. The alchemists’ psychology was a geocentric cosmology, which Jung claimed was a projection of the psyche. In depth psychological inquiry lies the structure of the psychological economy, that is, psychocosmology (on projection, see von Franz, 1980; 1980b). Von Franz (1980) interpreting Senior’s image of the two rays of the sun (one being open to the unconscious, that is living life justly, and the other being closed) explains that Luna represents the empty vessel into which both suns (and all other stars) pour their light. She [Luna] holds the tension of the opposites, the history of humanity and the beyond history, and all paradoxes in the later stage of the opus. She completes man’s aspect of feminine spirituality. “While for the woman,” says von Franz (1980), the moon “would personify her vegetative life basis, her instinctive life” (p. 150). This means that when the ego realizes and integrates the feminine aspect of the psyche, the unconscious, then the person opens to individuate to the Self.

Luna is Fatimah, the anima archetype in the Shi’ite psyche today, or activated even in the Prophet himself. It is and always has been the inner eye of the soul for humans with splitting powers. She brings the attitude toward the individuation process.

In Shi'ite gnosis, she, as a star-angel of the orient (Corbin, 1971/1978), can grip, possess, push, or pull toward psychological death and rebirth. She leads the ego-consciousness to the archetype of the Self. Her nature is in the Seal of Solomon, "where the upward-pointing triangle of soul and substance, and the downward-pointing triangle of spirit and essence merge" (Ramsay, 2017, p. 8).

This downward-pointing pull is a descent of the spirit. Ramsay (2017) argued that "this dying points inward into the body—inward and back into the physical ground of our being" (p. 61). This archetype as mother, therefore, affects the soul of the individual by integrating with spirit. It unites spirit and body in the *coniunctio* phase of the Lesser work. This phase is the inner meditation or self-recognition, which is the essence and goal of the opus. This phase gives a different view of ourselves than does the ego (von Franz, 1980b). It is symbolized by the eye, the mandala, self-knowledge, or in Shi'ism, by the Imam in the womb (knowledge-love or insight in passion) of Fatimah. Fatimah represents the soul, the eye that stands between the Self and the ego enabling both parties to see one another. For the Shi'ite believer, she is the bridge, a symbol as such, to and from the unconscious.

To summarize alchemically, the Shi'ite ego going through the *nigredo* stage first meets Fatimah. She is the psychopomp that leads the individuation process. She separates the ego-consciousness of the believer from external reality by way of *calcinatio*, *solutio*, and *sublimatio* in the Ashura ritual rites, where she gives birth to a refined consciousness. And then, she unites the refined consciousness with the daily ego-consciousness. In other words, she, as the double-faced Luna in alchemy, unites the lower red sulphur aspect of the self with the exalted spiritual Self.

Calcination, again, is the burning of the ego-body. The Old King, which represents red sulphur, salt or bitter resentment, is burned by the Mercurius into ashes that take place under Saturn corresponding to lead.

Solution, in the ritual, dissolves the ego-body ashes. Alchemists dissolved the physical *prima materia* in acid. In the ritual, this "acid" is the *dhikr Ahl al Bayt*, where tragic tales are used mytho-poetically to soften hearts and minds. This corresponds to Jupiter because this giant planet releases the rigidness of the Karbala's historical memories to a more relieved feeling, like a sense of expansion. Luna might move from her constricted Saturnian bonds to a subtle whiteness in the Jupiterian phase, closer to the sun. This is the spiritualization of the ego and Luna in the *solutio*.

In the Ashura ritual, solution and sublimation are connected with the elements of water and air; they are not separated in the ritual work. The tears of the Shi'a devotees may be imagined as evaporating in the air. This once more is a symbolic way of seeing spiritualization or rising of the body or matter. This could be interpreted as the Shi'ite soul and imagination rising (resurrecting) toward the inner imam. Of course, this "projection" is to be only understood by an analyst, not by the Shi'ite devotee, who is like a mystic in the ritual participation. Hussain in his or her tears is a psychological reality for the Shi'ite believers. They do not doubt this, and hence, an ethical depth psychological interpretation would be to not call the experience a "mere projection" or "nothing but projection".

Voices to Visions: Embodying the Spirit

At this stage, the ritual images form in the outward appearance of the Ashura ritual. They are unfolded and crafted from the depths of the imaginal sediments. The

believers are collectively captivated by the auditory images in the religious dramaturgy, the narrative of Karbala. These images not only psychologically effect the individual believer, but changes how he or she behaves collectively. These images are formative in that, as *prima materia*, or as the soul-mirror of a person, they have a feeling tone downwardness to their voice. This is something like: "O how the *Yazidi* camp treated the Prophet's women and children like animals!" The *prima materia* in the ritual must not be mistaken for the entire collective unconscious. It is the body/substance (*interiora terrae*) of the believer's psyche, not his or her spiritual essence of the soul. For one can, of course, never hope to transmute the entire sea while sitting in a boat (Burkhardt, 1967).

Psychologically, these auditory renderings in the Ashura ritual transmute to visions, to images by a Hermes or Mercurius process. The cause is a constant burning and dissolving going on in the ritual. The intensity of Ashura rites does not decrease; it fuels them to the maximum. Voices turn to vivid white images, as if the body of the devotee becomes numb from crying, weeping, and beating. Utter exhaustion is experienced, but the psychological images are not tired at all. Continued crying is heard in the *marathi* and *noha khani*. More *dhikr al Hussain* hits the devotional mind and heart of the participants. Even small children join with their parents in the ritual cry, not knowing why they are doing so. At some point, however, a moment occurs when all stops. The ego-consciousness regains reality and strength. At this stage in the Ashura ritual, a person's physical body and psychic body, the ego, have reached a point of spiritual presence where healing can be felt. The devotee remains in the realm of imagination with little effort while in the presence of the *Ahl al Bayt*.

As remembrances, as *prima materia*, the voices turned into visions, belong to a suprasensible world of images. They are at bottom, in a deeper sense, what Corbin (1981) called *imaginatrix,* or agent imagination. This means that at this point in the Ashura ritual, a Shi'a person who goes through the rites has cognitive powers of his or her own—that is, the immateriality of the imaginative power is revealed that does not perish with the ego/body's death. Such people are spiritualized in the *bātin*, in the imaginal; yet they come back to reality as *zāhir* (in the ritual rites) transmuted in love, offering a level of mystical hierarchy (a dehumanized state). During the Ashura commemoration, the images are expressed only in a symbolic way as physical entities; for instance, they appear in art, paintings, wall hangings, embroidery on black fabric, and printed posters.

These visual type images appear to have a Luna function in the process of individuation: They are forms of theophanies with a purpose (*telos*). They are the chemical agents of the psyche that work on emotions. They are the transmuted *prima materia* of a Shi'a devotee. The reason is that many functions are carried out by Fatimah (the spirit of nature). This agent who acts on the *prima materia* (a dis-eased state) of a person in the ritual is *Eros*, but here is the alchemical antinomy or paradox. This agent is not only acting on the prime matter, but it behaves as if it were an *a priori* content of the unconscious: It *is* the *prima materia*. The diseased state of a person is therefore viewed as an archetypal state. Alchemically, this state of mind is psychologically personalized, informing the rite of passage she (the agent) shows to the believer.

Shi'ite believers pathologize in the Ashura's ritual acts as if they have committed a sin (in their active imagination) by letting their "Imam," or their *Adam*, die at the Karbala battlefield. This guilt state is to be worked on during the stages of the ritual.

Luna guides the way because if she does not, then all the Shi'ite visual imageries become a phantasy in the mind, as opposed to true imagination. According to Corbin (1981), when people lose certainty (the world of pure intelligences, or angels, *malakut*), they fall prey to the principle of uncertainty, relativity, or phantasy. True or certain imagination takes the work to the imaginal, the *imaginatio vera* of Paracelsus, which is not an illusion. This phenomenon, where imagination devolves into illusion and disillusion, is seen in modern youth in Western societies where "nihilism and agnosticism begin" (Corbin, 1981, p. 28).

From the alchemist's perspective, leaving relativism aside in the *nigredo* stage of the ritual, a Shi'a phantasy in the Ashura ritual would be a Luna-consciousness in a deepening connection with the Sol consciousness. In other words, as Luna-consciousness increases in the ritual, the level of trance state, or the love for *Ahl al Bayt*, increases. The Sol consciousness is repressed for the sake of compensation. The unconscious forces are then in the position of control of a personality and may possess the ego somewhat completely. That is why mourning turns to weeping and veiling, and then to beating and self-flagellation. In the physical pain, a psychological breakdown ensues.

Usually, the mourning and weeping are accompanied by the Fatimah archetype, but this does not mean that she is not present in the other *mātam* ceremonies. She is in the entire Ashura ritual, coming and going, as she makes room for other members of the Household to enter the field of the imaginal.

In the beating ceremonies, Sol makes his appearance. As a warrior or chivalrous archetype in a man, Sol is exemplified in the act of chest beating and *noha khāni*. In the *noha khāni* ceremony, Luna and Sol meet, making way for the Greater or more

spiritualized imagination in the ritual. In the *noha khāni* (liturgical *dhikr* and mātam), which begins after *marāthi* and *khutba* (poetic elegies and sermons), the Shi'a participants stand up after the sitting rites of mourning and weeping, a symbolic gesture of Sol consciousness.

In the true image of the Shi'ite alchemy, gold is always present within the base metals. Gold is the intelligible that wants to be revealed. It is believed always active in the soul of the Prophet. Fatimah, his daughter, therefore, always carries the soul and wisdom of the Prophet. She is never without it, which in its true being, belongs to God.

In laboratory terms, when united with silver, gold shines its true nature as electrum. In a fire assay procedure, the scientist uses a little silver to refine gold out of a homogenous mixture of ignoble metals. Alchemy texts contain hundreds of arcane terms or pseudonyms. Not everyone knew or knows this art for the same reason that today only a few have knowledge of quantum physics. Jung gave a recognizable form of this alchemical symbolism through his psychology. As a result, the phenomenon of religious images/symbols can be seen in alchemical terms.

Visualizing Imagination

Human visual stimuli phylogenetically have developed over a long period because of fear of predatory attack, the instinct for survival, and other causes such as conformity to cultural shifts. Flaskerud (2010) explained the function of sight in the Ashura ritual ceremonies as: "that to many ritual observers, visualization and seeing is central to the recollection of Divine will and saintly power, the dissemination of religious knowledge, the transformation of emotions, to cultic behaviour, the understanding of ethical values and spiritual experience" (p. 2). To me, this means that Shi'as have developed a psychic

power of discernment, but this discernment is not what Jung meant by "epistemological criticism." Further, this discernment, what Henry Corbin has repeatedly and emphatically stated throughout his work, is about historical and transhistorical perspectives. That is, transhistorical is *historical* from a different world, the metaphysical world, which erupts in worldly events (Corbin, 1998b).

The recollection of the tragedy of Karbala is not only historical; it is also a traditional way of seeing the divine world without losing the ground of history. For Jung (1963), "The primordial images and the nature of the archetype took a central place in my researches, and it became clear to me that without history there can be no psychology" (p. 205).

Seeing ritual art through the lens of a cultural complex, for instance, contributes to an archetypal activation. Only then can meaning be created in seeing events from a historical perspective. This happens in the Ashura ritual in countries like Iran and Iraq. In countries like Pakistan and India, however, Shi'a Muslims seldom depict in imagery, in paintings, of *Ahl al Bayt*. My research has discovered an increasing adoption of image portrayal, however, because of the World Wide Web, especially depicting Muharram processions with a variety of passionate images (*ta'ziyah*) on YouTube. Additionally, in Pakistan, one can now see images of Imam Hussain and Imam Ali on wall hangings, flags, stickers, and iconography.

Flaskerud's (2010) research in Iran and Iraq showed a new genre of Karbala narrative paintings. According to her work, these images have been 200 years in the making. They have been a sort of an imaginal secret for political reasons. This art depicts "episodes and characters from the battle, in particular Imam Husayn, his sons Ali Akbar

and Ali Asghar, his half-brother Abu al-Fazl al-Abbas, and their mourning female family members" (p. 75). In these symbolic paintings, colorful art sketches, and embroidery work, a phenomenologist can see with physical eyes what Shi'as imagine in the Ashura ritual: the beheading of Imam Hussain, the killing of al-Abbas by the riverbank as he tries to get water from the Euphrates (symbolic river) for the women and children, and the holding by Hussain of Ali Asghar at a crucial time on the Day of Ashura when an arrow penetrates his 6-month-old neck.

All these depictions have visual significance. They are outward expressions of the inner world. One painting, in particular, is very popular.[16] I first saw it in 2008, when I visited Pakistan. It synthesizes many themes, capturing a moment after Hussain's death. It shows the aftermath of Hussain's death when his wounded white horse (*Zul Jinnah*) brought the news of his master's death back to the camp to the veiled women and children. They are all wearing black, and their faces are not shown. Details are vividly crafted in showing blood spilling from his (*Zul Jinnah's*] wounds. Tears flow down from his beastly eyes as his head bows down in reverence. Zaynab consoles him as if to hold the four-footed beast in her arms. After all, *he* represents the Imam. Hussain's little 5-year-old daughter hugs his leg.

This image has a mythic connection to the Pietà. Jung (1937/1968e) went through major religious traditions and showed parallels and matrices of this symbolic image in "The Paradigm of the Unicorn." In the Shi'a image of *Zul Jinnah*, the Fatimah archetype

[16] Caption: "The evening of Ashura." Signature: Mahmoud Farshchian. Date: 1359, 1981.

is seen as the feminine, the virgin taming the beast. The horse[17] in this scene can therefore be interpreted in two ways: (a) as an animal-beast, Jung (1937/1968e) named it the "penetrating force of the *spiritus mercurialis*," or Sulphur in alchemy, and (b) symbolic [ecclesiastical] allegory of "Christ and of the Holy Ghost," Quicksilver in alchemy (p. 438). I am interpreting the Sulphur to be the instinctive or substantive nature of the imam that is active, and the Quicksilver to mean the spiritual or essential aspect of the imam that is passive.

In the Ashura ritual, colorful images and portraits of Imam Ali and Imam Hussain (also Abbas and Ali Akbar) all evoke a similar catalytic setting for active imagination along with Fatimah's role. This has a powerful visual effect in two ways that parallel Jung's interpretation of the unicorn symbol. For example, the portraits and paintings are crafted in such a way that, on the one hand, at a glance, they show the archetype of the warrior. For instance, Imam Hussain is depicted riding his horse on the battlefield.

Throughout history, a horse was an essential part of warfare, symbolizing might and power. This concept compares to the modern concept of horsepower in cars or a military tank. Shi'as also revere another symbol worth mentioning: the image of Imam Ali's sword (*dhul fiqār*). This double-bladed sword is depicted usually in the sickled form of split ends like a snake's tongue. The paintings also show Imams holding a shield and flag firmly, all symbolizing strength. This activates the masculinity active principle in the Ashura ritual, a chivalrous attitude. On the other hand, the painting shows, when focusing

[17] The lion and the sun are two alchemical images that refer to Imam Ali in Shi'ism. See. Flaskerud, 2010, pp. 179-184 for their symbolic significance and formal adoption in the different periods as the official emblematic images of the Iranian state, especially by the Qajar shahs.

on the Imam's animated gentle face, beautiful deep eyes, a groomed beard, a headscarf, and elegant clothing—a feminine smile of a philosopher-savior.

From the perspective of the Imam's feminine side on the Day of Ashura, Shi'as "see the imam's face" with the perspective of Fatimah. As this perspective is named *mazlumiat* (*mazlum* is a person who has been oppressed or wronged by evil), so is the Christian expression in the Pietà, a sculpture by Michelangelo Buonarroti made in 1499 now residing in the Vatican. This image also plays out in the Old Testament figure, Job. In Islam, it is Hussain who symbolizes *mazlumiat*, a sacrificial attitude of understanding, with a voice against evil and oppression that sides with upholding the moral truth.

The month of Muharram has a certain feeling, the combination of these two visualizations in the belief and piety of Shi'ite imagination. This visualization carries the motif of death and rebirth or divorce and marriage. Further, these can be translated alchemically as martyrdom and resurrection or *separatio* and *coniunctio*. The Shi'a soul in the *nigredo* stage of the ritual leaves this world, a sacrificial act in the liturgy (service to the "persons"). By similar liturgical methods such as spiritual prayers and supplications (*du'a*), the soul comes back as if into the body. In this way, the believer's soul, holding the tension, achieves the Lesser Resurrection from the *nigredo* to the *albedo*, where a realization of the soul is a reanimation of the individual's personality.

Everyone understands that even in married life, for instance, a divorce between two people causes suffering, a sort of blackness. Both husband and wife, for instance, feel the "death" of a relationship. The bond of marriage is torn apart, and a new "house" is needed for life to continue. The idea of martyrdom takes on a different, but familiar, psychological attitude as in a divorce. An archetypal force behind martyrdom is what the

Shi'as mean when they utter the word *mazlum*. *Mazlum* means patience, an endurance of suffering caused by a tyrannical and evil power. It does not connote to "victimization."

Imam Hussain, for Shi'as, is the living prince of the martyrs (*syed ul-shuhada*). Martyrdom, unlike the term "divorce," holds the idea of submission of the "I" principle. It is not a submission to (or integrate with) evil forces, but a struggle against them. This inner struggle (*jihad*) starts with a feeling, a spiritual power (*himmah*); as a result, the *nigredo* stage in the Ashura ritual serves to separate or martyr the ego by "beating" it with *himmah*. It is done by seeing the tyranny of the ego's rigid nature.

The tragedy of Karbala has become a religious symbol opposing tyranny for the Shi'a Muslims. This symbol is anchored in commemorative feelings of justice and deep emotional anxiety of death and separation. These feelings are often misused by those with political aims. This is the reason Shi'ite iconography, which has changed in the last 200 years, is well-suited to convey sentimental ideas and beliefs not only to Shi'a Muslims but to other religious denominations as well. Collectively speaking, for instance, the iconography of "Our Lady of Fátima" has evolved from a Christian sentimental recount of an apparition of The Virgin Mary. According to Flaskerud (2010), "She appeared to three shepherd children near the village of Fátima in Portugal in 1917" (p. 234). In Shi'ite ceremonies, depiction (*parcham*) of Our Lady of Fatima, who stands on the crescent moon and shines like the sun, together with Karbala images already discussed, is also found in countries like Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Lebanon, and Turkey. The idea is that by making a vow, *promessa*, to The Virgin (*Kore* in Greek), Mary and Fatimah, the mourning mothers, return consolation to those who suffer in the name of Jesus and

Hussain, the two historical sons who underwent pain and suffering for their people (Flaskerud, 2010).

Psychologically, then, the function of the Fatimah (Luna = chemical silver) archetype can be interpreted as pulling the Saturnian-lead consciousness first toward herself, to introduce her archetypal nature (*fitrah*) to the adept. The archetypal position of the new moon of Muharram, for Shi'as, corresponds to lead or the planet Saturn in alchemy. Consequently, Luna is below the cross or the philosophical tree in this stage. In Saturn, she is the heaviest of the four base metals. She is lead-consciousness with the devotee. Her gravity influences the psyche more densely in this stage than in the other planetary stage. She pulls human ego-consciousness toward the darker layers, to the unconscious realm. Psychological sufferings happen as Cheetham (2003) explained:

> Periods of intense depression and paralysis, which the old manuscripts call the "blackness," the nigredo, alternate with interludes of a searching confusion, which can take many forms. The seeking involved is an effort of a peculiar and subtle kind, demanding patience, sensitivity, and delicacy enough to try the most devoted soul. (p. 70)

In short, the first stage of alchemy, the *nigredo*, is not considered as having a numinous experience in the sense of enlightenment. Nonetheless, it is numinous in the depth psychological and Shi'ite sense because darkness can also be experienced as awe. Moreover, in and of itself, suffering does not lead to a numinous experience. It *is* numinous in the Ashura ritual. Upon this realization over time, a feeling of "leading up to" the numinous is felt so that the individual actually suffers in the presence of the

Fatimah archetype. Enlightenment, therefore, is to be seen as an understanding of her presence—that is, being conscious of the unconscious.

It is possible to see the sun's light in the moon because the psychic perception of anything requires body substance, matter (von Franz, 1980). The sun's rays cannot be seen in the darkness of empty space; they can be viewed only when they smash on an object and are then reflected. In Shi'ite metaphysics, in order to witness (*shahadah*) the divine Oneness, a believer has to see it through *tashbih*—that is, to start the witnessing process, *tawhid*, in a multiplicity of this world, in the soul experience of the Prophet and the Imam, and not in the Oneness per se alone. The reason is that the Oneness belongs to Allah alone, His transcendent Light, *Tanzih*. But this *tanzih* is also to be realized as knowledge, an ontological knowledge that expresses acknowledgment that must start with the darkness of Him.

Earlier I asked if archetypes change. The answer provided by the ritual would be a yes only when seen in light of the mental functioning of image-making, that is to say, masculine (Sol) and feminine (Luna) integration as a bi-unity representing a syzygy (a double aspect of oneness). The crescent moon is as the psyche is protean in the Shi'ite soul. She changes from her darkest form to more spiritualized ones when movement from Saturn to Jupiter is achieved. Because as the symbol of Saturn shows, she is under the cross, in its lowest and corporeal reality. Because she is also one half of the structuring principle of Mercurius, when lead is transmuted by her into tin as the ritual moves forward, she corresponds to the planet Jupiter. At that point, the moon's position is then attached to its horizontal axis—that is, to a subtle form. Here, in Jupiter, Fatimah with the devotee(s), or the substance of the *prima materia*, is spiritualized to a higher subtle body,

to a newer added conscious state. Finally, the Luna-consciousness reigns alone, after the Jupiter stage, fully actualized in the *albedo*. No planet is attached now to her state of feminine spirituality. This completes the Lesser Work in alchemy, where all four elements of being and nature are united. The soul is ready for the Greater Work, further spiritualizing stages take place under the influence of Venus and Mars. To receive the mercurial power of the spiritual Sol, the masculine principle, Luna as a flower in the *albedo*, as the feminine eros, is ready to open herself to the rays of the masculine logos.

Synthesis of the Lesser Work

To synthesize what has been achieved in the work so far, the analysis revealed that the Muharram gatherings are usually held in temples or halls with big courtyards known as *imambargah*. They are decorated mostly in black. A *majlis* is the starting point where the believers meet the evil antagonists, the historical persons who collectively represent the contradictory forces of *Yazidiāt*, the shadow side of the remembrance of the tragedy (projected *materia* participants work on).

In the act of remembering, the *nigredo* is activated in two ways: 1) the ego falls into a depression, into the unconscious shadow, and/or 2) the shadow is brought up to consciousness. This is done in the *dhikr* ceremonies that activate imagination. Imagination is not achieved only by lowering consciousness. Before the passionate rites are observed, participants hear and see frustration, anger, and animosity in the gatherings, a feeling distinct from other gatherings of worship in Islam. This anger is for the killers of the Prophet's family. The dark tragic memories play a crucial part.

A person's sense of distaste, an attitude for the murderers of Imam Hussain symbolically stands for knowledge of evil. The ritual begins with a temperament of

projected guilt, of untamed ignorance of the good. It is as if the Shi'ite unconscious animus governs the self to which the ego, as an initiate in the ritual, submits to the process of individuation. This is because the latter almost never starts with equanimity.

Exaltation and expressed love (*mawaddat*) for the *Alh al Bayt* comes in the form of poetry and prose. They are in the *majalis* setting where the devotees sit on the floor and listen to a *zakir* or *zakira*. In the sermons, which is the next rite in the *majlis*, downplaying and degrading the opposing *Yazidi* party, in turn, also elevates the stature of *Alh al Bayt*, and as a reward to those who are on their side, the Shi'ite party. Within this historical excursion and political Shi'ite/Sunni rhetoric, however, the goal of the Ashura ritual is not forgotten. As Shi'a Muslims know through a meticulous understanding of good and evil, the spirit of the Ashura ritual belongs elsewhere, beyond the realm of the bodily senses—namely, with the *Alh al Bayt* in the *mundus imaginalis*. They somehow know or intuit that the Ashura *spiritus* is to be sought (by the ego) in the realm of subtle bodies. The participants' psyche should, as Corbin (1971/1978) puts it, go toward "the Abode of Hymns, the Earth of Hūrqalyā, the Heavenly Jerusalem, *descend* progressively in direct relation to the *ascent* of the man of light" (p. 42). The Ashura rites are not, and should not, remain stuck in worldly rhetoric. They are meant to meet their imam half-way in the middle, in the soul. Modern Shi'a *ulama* (scholars) should reflect on this.

This is precisely the reason the egoic forces in the ritual are quickly overpowered by the memories of the tragedy, which softens the human heart. The soul-spirit penetrates the solid body in the *solutio* operation. The transmutational process occurs on the rigidity of attitude via pantomime images addressed in particular rites. The ceremonial dramatization causes purifying—by burning (*calcinatio*) and washing (*ablutio*)—the

believer's soul from the dark body of *Yazidiāt* to the state of the imaginal, and then to the angelic pleroma. The body seems separated from the soul—that is, the antagonistic side or the realm of the senses (instinctual drives such as sex or power) is set aside or left behind because a believer must be a true devotee to the *Alh al Bayt* in a just way. For Shi'as, the *Alh al Bayt* must be loved in expression (*muhabbat*) for who they are, just as a true Muslim prays to God not just to gain access to paradise or out of fear of the devil. This procedure leads to the whitening of the soul or the *albedo* in alchemy. "Here," contended Burckhardt (1967), "the soul bears the name of spirit" (p. 71).

Exorcising the inner devil (the red sulphur of alchemy) has its own paradisial reward, but this does not mean that he is forgotten in the Ashura ritual. On the contrary, the ritual is fully aware of evil forces, which are contradictory to the *Hussainiāt* (spirit of the Imam). In essence, the Ashura ritual simply refuses, or should refuse, to suffer by the fuel of negative fire. Here, the evil forces in Shi'ism are not to be confused with the dark forces of the collective unconscious. In Shi'ism, evil is contradictory to the good, not complementary (see Corbin, 1971/1978; Cheetham, 2012).

Leaving aside the philosophical differences between Corbin and Jung, I simply want to direct that specific attitude that both thinkers grabbed onto. This energy is everywhere in the ritual's temperament. One can feel this spirit in the participant's mourning and suffering. It is the love and passion for the Prophet and his family, which begins in the broken hearts of Shi'a Muslims. These broken hearts can be said to be in a black chaotic *state* of consciousness, in the imaginal state, beyond the phenomenal, yet not with God alone. The Shi'ite Imam is there because he leaves his abode of *walayah* to be with his Shi'as. He is with each and every one of them personally.

The Shi'ite consciousness, for Corbin, is individually gained, not collectively. From a Jungian view, this would be a state where archetypes of the collective rise to meet the personal Ashura complexes, interfering with the ego life. Because the inner contents (images of the *Alh al Bayt*) want to be recognized. They call for a shift in consciousness in order to see the repressed spiritual and religious urges or instincts. Realization of this situation is the first step to the *albedo* from the shadow aspect of the psyche. This realization in the ritual would be hermeneutics or interpretation of the transcendental processes mixed with the personal stuff.

In short, the prime matter of the soul conceived as *Yazidiāt*, the dark, lower and evil aspect of the psyche is recognized by conscious light as the soul ascends from earth to heavenly realm (free from the lower urges of animality). The psyche after this recognition joins in contemplation with the higher aspect of the soul, the *Hussainiāt* spirit, and separates from its egoic body—to change the *Yazidi* heavy and volatile substance (red sulphur) into a subtle one by way of ministering ritual rites, conducting a congregational sacrifice, moving to an elevated conscious state, and then steer the "I" person into the higher imaginal state. This is why, in the ritual, Yazid's actions are brought up to consciousness and compared symbolically with the Qur'anic verses of Satan's role in the cosmic drama, to shape one's knowledge of the spiritual side of the images with more intensity. As a result, in the sacrifice of the individual's lower faculties, the egoless or evil-free Shi'a souls meet (*ziarat*) their imam—completing the Lesser work.

Chapter 6

The *Rubedo*: The Greater Work of the Ritual

According to Jung (1955-56/1970a), the *rubedo* follows directly from the *albedo* stage. When the *albedo* was symbolized by *cauda pavonis* or the peacock's tail for the alchemists, it meant to them daybreak or dawn. The *rubedo* for them meant sunrise. While the *albedo* in the work is that time in the stage when sunlight first appears, the *rubedo* stage would be when the sun appears full. However, the color red of the *rubedo* in dreams could also mean dawn. This is because, when the sun may appear full near the horizon, on the other side can appear as sunset, that is, looked at from the perspective of the unconscious, "which as a rule," comments Jung (1936/1968c) "immediately preceded the completion of the work" (p. 188). It *neared* the completion of the work because the adept realized or brought to his conscious state of being not only something that was hidden but also, he switched his perspective to the other side, the unknown. So, he stands under his consciousness and sees the reality from an archetypal eye. He realizes, standing physically in the world, that both worlds are in actuality one world.

Biologically, this realization corresponds to the revivification of life, its sustenance, blood, heat, and its movement from and to the body. The *rubedo* stage is related to the sun directly and the raising of its light, heat, and fire. Its primary concern is therefore the center, the heart, the kernel, the locus, and the vital spirit. Its operations describe the relationship of the body (*jism*) to the spirit (*rūh*), and how a new consciousness emerges from their sacred marriage (*heiros gamos*). The *rubedo* stage describes three operations or steps of the *coniunctio*. I will illustrate by superimposing

upon them the categorical stations of knowing and being in Shi'ite cosmology: spirit, imaginal, and corporeal.

> Ramsey (2017) wrote that the *rubedo*
>
> [takes us] into circles of wholeness that ripple out from the Stone—far out into the sea of our furthest understanding where the Above—as alchemy sees it—reveals the secret, substance and essence (or quintessence) of what is Below: inside us, around us, and finally at the heart and centre of our lives lit by the sun. (p. 140)

When depth psychologists analogize the sunrising to mean rising of human consciousness above the horizon of the unconscious, they see two perspectival points: Above and Below. The Above implies the human world: that human consciousness sees other objects in the world. The Below implies that consciousness recognizes its subjectivity or interiority. For a psychologist, that which was before dark, hidden, and below the world of possibilities, is now illuminated by the rise of the sun; the sun gives birth to knowledge not only of the others but also itself. The sun's penetrating rays (luminous bodies) allow life and the inorganic contents of the world to be illuminated. These rays are made of light or awareness in many degrees and shapes. The rays point to the sun, their source, and they want to be known. They can not be known as such; they need a dark background.

In Shi'ite gnosis, the Below implies the human world. The schema is reversed. This would mean that consciousness illuminates our physical environment in two ways: 1) consciousness shows its own nature in the things illuminated, and 2) consciousness

realizes itself by its illumination. Symbolically, consciousness is a light hidden in the depths of things, and also within itself there is something that realizes its own light.

In both cases, therefore, first, we understand that, even in the dark, there is a potential to know things by objectively perceiving because of the rising of the sun; and second, that this perceiving is itself a rising, a subjective experience of the world.

This two-fold understanding, which corresponds to discursive reasoning and intellectual intuition, is an *Ishraqi* worldview of the *unus mundus* that Ibn al 'Arabi reserved for those people whom he called, *afrād* (Chodkiewicz, 1993). These two views act as Archimedean points from which the Shi'ite psyche interprets and knows the reality of the Imam or Pole. These two points correspond to the old philosophical debate between essence and being or mind and matter. Psychologically, though, these points lead to a paradox. Meaning that for the psyche the sunlight is not only the source of *how* we see, but the source of *what* we see—in uniting what is above to what is below, consciousness with the unconscious—then we create a cognitive product which is also a *realization* of the imaginal by the imagination. In other words, the imaginal is both a faculty of perception (imagination) and a world that is perceived (*mundus imaginalis*). I will come back to describe and amplify this shortly.

In the *rubedo* work of the ritual, the alchemical fire increases so the human consciousness can ascend through the *materia* to the imaginal and spiritual worlds (see Figure 5). Left behind in the Lesser operations is the carnal desires of sex, power, and the material life of ego-centeredness. So, the Greater work of the *coniunctio* begins strictly in the imaginal, where the conscious state of our devotees/believers is closer to what Corbin calls the 'spiritual earth'.

This risen consciousness of the *rubedo* moves to unite the pairs of opposites, astrologically—Venus' love affair with Mars, and then ultimately with Sol (see Figure 9). Venus symbolizes beauty, love, and procreation. She is the Romanized version of the Greek Aphrodite who rose from sea foam and then turned into a fish. Although Mars is equated to instinct, we symbolize it as the warrior aspect or a struggle/combative form of the animus. We can symbolize these two deities as the archetype of Fatimah and Ali, in our ritualistic sense. The former would be the realization of the psyche's movement (the rising and going under), the latter would be her protector, a vigilant soldier who keeps the corporeal forces in check.

We can equate their union phenomenologically in the *matam* ceremonies of the ritual, especially the self-flagellation rites. We witness that the procession (*juloos*), which occurs after the sermon, men without shirts flagellate with knives and swords. Simultaneously, a beautiful recitation (*nohas*) entices the crowd into a controlled trance state.

Shi'ism interprets the attributes of beauty and struggle to the archetype of divine majesty or God's Names. Shi'ite thinking limits its psychology of mythologizing because the latter's horizon stops at the multiplicity or polytheistic notion of *tashbih*. For this reason, Shi'a masters such as Tabatabai (2003) claimed that transcendence (*tanzih*) of the worldly events leads the believer (even the prophets) to the ineffable mystery of an undifferentiated *walayah* (see Figure 11). Meaning that the one-sidedness of consciousness, those who focus on *tashbih*, results in dead symbols.

Now because the Greater work is with the sun, my goal in this chapter is to show that the devotees' conscious state—after the *albedo* stage of spiritual dawning, which is

Luna consciousness brought by the Fatimah archetype in the ritual—moves closer to Sol consciousness. Luna and Sol are two principles that complement one another and are united (*coniunctio*) in a sacred marriage (*hierophany*). In the Ashura ritual, this marriage is epiphanic (filtered theophany) where I think the devout believers enter a meditative state, a kind of deeper dialogue with the ritual spirits, the *Ahl al Bayt* or the Imams (see Figure 12).

I believe that the Shi'a participants, as I have said earlier, do not experience God, Allah. Rather, they meet their *imami* light (numinosum) within. And it is through their imam that they may or may not meet God. Each person may have a particular personal image of his or her imam. Because Imam stands for the archetype of humanity (*rūh adamiyah*). The Imam is like the sun, the source of all rays of light. He is the power within the heart. The Imam symbolizes the totality of the human psyche, consciousness and the unconscious, and in the Jungian sense, the archetype of the Self.

This stage puts us in a position to discuss the ego's meeting with the Self using alchemical symbols, depth psychology, and Shi'ite cosmology. Therefore, in my bringing them together in a union, which is the aim of *rubedo*, my readers may find my language uses different frames of reference and transcends disciplinary boundaries, hopefully giving birth to a deeper understanding. Jung gives us three levels of the greater coniunctio. I will discuss them here, although I will suggest a subtle difference in the *process* of the soul's journey from the point of view of Shi'ism and depth psychology.

In Shi'ism, *tawhid* is attested to by uttering the *shahada*, which has three parts: God, prophecy, and Imamate (*la illaha il-allah, Muhammadan rasūl Allah, Ali un Wali*

ullah; meaning, there is no god but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God, and Ali is the Friend of God).

I am using the metaphysical doctrine of *tawhid* (oneness) put forward by those Shi'ite philosophers whose works were synthesized by many masters including Sayyid Haydar Amuli (d. 1385), Mir Damad (d. 1630), and Mulla Sadra (d. 1640). Although I cannot possibly go into briefing their prolific work here, my research into their philosophical insights (found in Corbin's and Nasr's work) has provided a unique perspective into the soul (as far as active imagination allows to integrate with the contents of the Self). I will use this perspective (as alchemical hermeneutics) to compare and contrast with the three steps of coniunctio described by Jung in his *Mysterium Coniunctionis*.

The first coniunctio, worked out by a Christian alchemist, Gerhard Dorn (d. 1584 CE), is called *unio mentalis* where the human soul (in its neutral state, *unio naturalis*) departs from the body and integrates with the spirit. In the second coniunctio, this soul-spirit syzygy, the *unio mentalis*, is then re-integrated back with the body. In the third coniunctio, the body-soul-spirit is united with the world, *unus mundus* (Jung, 1955-56/1970a) (see Figure 14).

We should bear in mind, however, that in the Ashura ritual, these sequential steps, save the last step, do not happen in an exact linear fashion. For instance, I have noted that these steps occur simultaneously in different aspects of the rites, which correspond with the psychic states of a participant, even though in the Muharram spirit, there is a collective state of being. Edinger (1995) informs us about this psychic individuality in relation to the analytical process. He says,

> The first stage does not have to be fully completed before shifting to the next stage and then to the third. . . Different aspects of the personality can be undergoing different stages of the coniunctio at more or less the same time, or right after one another. (p. 285)

This is certainly the case in the Ashura ritual as well, as I see it. We can say that while one participant can be in the *albedo* stage, another participant can still be in the *nigredo* or have moved on to the *rubedo*. This is the reason one can witness in the *marsia khani*, the opening ceremony of the ritual, some people calmly go through the process of religious recitations of the Qur'an and listen to the *dhikr* ceremonies attentively symbolizing respect and patience with Fatimah in a more cerebral sense. While others are ready to beat their flesh, gesturing *mātam* and loudly vocalize their concretized beliefs with confidence during the sermons showing enthusiastic praise to Imam Hussain and Imam Ali.[18] We can see the three coniunctio steps in the same way.

Unio Mentalis

Psychologically, the Shi'as engage with their spiritual desires, which we can interpret as multiple luminaries (like fishes' eyes in the deep sea) of the collective unconscious. Ultimately, they are united or connected as organs of one body. Teleologically Shi'ite consciousness comes to terms with the collective archetypes of the unconscious, a deeper move to a realization of the Self.

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[18] This concretized belief is not to be confused with fundamentalism or individualism, rather it is a product of *unio mentalis* with the body, the second coniunctio that holds all meanings of the perfect form (*al sūrat-e-kāmila*) of the Imam. This is one reason Shi'as do not interpret *separatio* in the *Imami coniunctio.*

According to Shi'ite gnosis—especially its Ismaili form, which is closer to Gnostic Christianity (not Paulinism but Ebionism[19])—this *realization* is an insight. It is perceived as both seen inwardly and, in the world, as multiple forms of external existence. The alchemist mystics understood this insight to be their philosophers' stone and the goal of the work. We can say that it is a realization of all realizations in a supraformal archetype within the human being. It is a realization that realizes upon itself and all other realizations, whether the latter take the form of Islam, Christianity, or any other form of knowledge. This realization is the soul (*logos* and *eros*) of the work because even though it is supraformal, it is also all-comprehensive, in the sense of being transformed in the knowledge of the Perfect Man. In other words, it is not the ineffable Principle. It is the realization of the ineffable. This is the reason Corbin (1964) writes that it is "not the witness of an external event but the medium *in which* the event takes place… that knowledge does not bear upon Being, but it *is* Being, aware of itself" (p. 72). The imagination in which events take place is self governed by a being, the imaginal person, in whom the external and the internal, unite.

"Our" Mercurius. Earlier I said that this realization is an imaginal product of the collective unconscious. But if all archetypes are in the unconscious, then the archetype of the Self should also be in the unconscious. But this is not the case with the Self. This archetype is always linked with consciousness and is not strictly unconscious. Not only that, but it is conscious from within and without. It is aware of itself and ego-consciousness. We can say that it does not need our ego to be conscious. But Jung, as a psychologist, suggests it does. It needs our consciousness, for it is unconscious as well. It

[19] See Corbin (1964) on an Ebionite conception of the Primordial Adam immunized against all sins.

is a paradoxical problem that puzzled the alchemists. It is like the lapis-mercurius, which they were striving to make. It was difficult for them because, psychologically, as soon as a flash of insight came to them (about the Self), it immediately disappeared again. The reason for this is that this product is made by half physical man and half metaphysical man, "a psychological symbol expressing some thing created by man and yet supra-ordinate to him" (Jung, 1955-56/1970a, p. 454). We can add and say that what this half metaphysical man is for Jung, for the Shi'ite philosophers, he would be the man who sees the *rubedo* sunset from the other side, from an archetypal eye. This means that this paradoxical man has to see things from the perspective of the unseen.

This product in all its paradoxical confusion is a Man—a man in the sense of Anthropos.[20] He is personified *as* "our" Mercurius (*nostra mercurialis*) in philosophical alchemy. But he is also personified *by* Mercurius, meaning that it is he himself the epiphany of the Self archetype. For in Shi'ite alchemy, it is here that the Imam speaks for God or as Corbin (1988) writes, "he who 'answers for' God before men" (p. 178). This to me is another sign of the Shi'ite alchemists' withdrawal of projections.

We have to deal with this mysterious figure of Mercurius once again in our ritual simply because, in philosophical alchemy, which is deeply connected with Greek mythology and in Arab/Persian thought, he is a shapeshifter deity, a psychopomp, and the medium agent within the psyche. In our ceremonial passionate rites (sermons, flagellation), he plays a crucial role—like glue—that unites the opposites: heaven/earth, male/female, king/queen in the Shi'ite sense. Seen from the outside, he is the quicksilver of the alchemists, holding the *effects* of the acids and bases in the vessel. But he is also

[20] The term "man" does not denote gender throughout this study. It means mankind.

the catalyst and cause (of interpretation and analysis) seen from the inside. In the Lesser work, he is the Fatimah archetype (*anima* or soul of the work). In the Greater work, he symbolizes the father, the son, and the husband of Fatimah (a.s). He is the alchemical Sol, the agent of metamorphoses, the meaning of texts, the divine epiphany or unveiling (*kashf*), the Imam, the third person of the *shahada* (attestation of oneness).

In the Ashura ritual, the imagination of the devout person is rendered active by his or her conscious will *and* also by his or her Imami consciousness. This imaginal work withdraws projections as one reflects on the psyche's mirroring process (absorbing the outer images of the tragedy into the dialogue within). Symbolizing the Jungian notion of the pre-existent totality of the Self, in Shi'ism, the realized Mercurius is also named *nafs adamiyah* (soul of mankind). He is equated with God's Breath given to the terrestrial Adam (*rūh al rahmān adami*) or with the Sun's light within the souls of Man (*nur al ilāhi nafsi*).

In the Christian-Gnostic sense (Ebionite conception, related to Shi'ite Imamology), the Breath of God (*tanaffus*) is the same figure as the spiritual Adam, the Holy Spirit (*Nafas al-Rahmān* or *Nafas Rahmānī*), or Gabriel (a.s). He is the Anthropos-Christos, the esoteric Jesus, the pre-Christian Christ, or an archetype of the human race, "who as Angel prince of a pleroma, is a *receptacle of souls* [italics added for emphasis]" (Corbin, 1964, p. 89). For a psychologist, the appearance of this figure might despiritualize the world, but from the Shi'ite perspective, he is an archetypal-angelic person, who represents a conscious field, a pleroma (*walayah* of the Imam), bringing a worldview that receives communication of all souls.

Imam Ali: The Gateway of Knowledge. For the Shi'a devotees in the ritual, it is through understanding the Imam's role as the personage of the *walayah*, that his or her individuated imam is rediscovered. For he, the Imam, according to our Shi'ite philosophers, symbolizes in a person imagination, seeing, insight, understanding, and meaning within one's psyche as such (Corbin, 1964, 1988). In other words, once a believer is initiated in the ritual, then the believer's knowledge of himself corresponds to the knowledge of the Imam, which is, in essence, the knowledge of God. In this way, he rediscovers the meaning of "he who knows himself knows his Lord" (*man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbahu*). Lord in the sense is the Imam, and we can say in the Jungian sense that he represents the *anima mundi*. Knowledge of the Imam through love becomes knowledge of God. However, by consciously entering the *mundus imaginalis*, which is the opening of the inner eye, not only *tawhid* or oneness of God is understood, but also, God knows the believer through the Imam. Because as the sixth Imam says, according to Mulla Sadra, "the knowledge that God has of the believer is the knowledge that the believer has of us" (cited in Corbin, 1988, p. 182). Imam is therefore a gate through which a seeker enters the spiritual knowledge and through with God knows the seeker. A famous hadith of the Prophet, which was mentioned earlier, says, "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate". We can now say that the term 'city' means the prophetic pleroma.

Shi'ite theosophers such as Sayyid Haydar Amuli placed the cosmological station of Imam Ali as being greater than all the prophets, save the Prophet Muhammad. In a way, even the Prophet himself is saying that it is through Ali that I am understood, for he is the gate to me. Hence, he himself, so to speak, needs the Imam to know his Self. This

means for Muhammad to communicate with God, or vice versa, the medium of the Imam is needed.

Haydar Amuli, therefore, puts the *walayah*, as a categorical pleroma, nearest to God (see Figure 10). In this way, the Prophet's reality can be understood as a double-faced personality. When the Prophet faces the corporeal world, he is the Prophet (*nabi*). But when he faces the divine essence of Himself, he is the Imam, the inner guide of the Prophet, homologous to the Archangel Gabriel (a.s). In other words, Imam is the person of the walayah, who is the medium between God and mankind. He is God's vicegerent on earth, a person who guides humanity towards God.

Imam's Relationship to Christ. According to Corbin (1964), the Imam's role in the Christian dramaturgy is that of the Holy Spirit sent to Mary (a.s), who "inspires her with its own breath and 'takes body' in her with a reality which is not that of a material body but of a subtle celestial body" (p. 83). Relating this to Shi'ite Imamology, Corbin (1964) writes:

> The miracle of the virginal conception is not the main point. . . rather, it becomes a necessary correlate as soon as the vision is concentrated on the central problem, which is to elucidate the superior constitution of the celestial Aeon united with the man Jesus and the manner of their union. (p. 83)

This points to a topic regarding the nature of Christ, but for us, it is simply pointing to the relationship with the archetype of the Self, who is named the celestial Adam (*bātin*), with Jesus (a.s), the terrestrial Adam (*zāhir*). Hence, this archetype of knowledge plays a significant role not in transforming human souls as the alchemical Mercurius only, but

also in Shi'ism, via his angelic voice or "virgin conception 'by the ear,' which means *by faith*, *ex audit*…" (Corbin, 1964, p. 83)—that discloses the relationship between the Prophet Muhammad and the Imam that came from his generations. That is to say, that just as Jesus is born from Mary (daughter of prophet Imran in the Qur'an), the Imam archetype must also be born from the line of Fatimah. This puts Ali, Fatimah's husband, the Prophet's brother and son, and the first Imam of Twelver Shi'ism in a parallel position with the Holy Spirit, archetypally.

From the position of *unio mentalis*, one can interpret here that this Holy Spirit was given to Ali and hence Fatimah—just as it was to Mary—via the Prophet, 'by the ear'. It was the initiation of the inner teachings of the *ta'wil* that Ali, as an earthly soul, could hold the celestial understanding of his angelicity not only by experiencing the archetypal numinosum as knowledge perceived but also, living and being his angel (as we understand the rising of the sun to be). Imam Ali in Shi'ism and Sufism, by realizing the pre-existent nature of his angelic self, is immunized from sin (immaculated). He is the center, the Pole, for guiding beyond the sensible world and bringing the suprasensible world to humanity.

Mulla Sadra explains the supra-sensible reality (*qutb al-aqtab*) of the Imam as being an inner law of eschatology and return. This law is also expressed by Ibn al 'Arabi that the reality of lower being requires the existence of higher being preexistent to it (Chittick, 1989; Corbin, 1969; Izutsu, 1994). The being of Imam signifies the highest of the degree of existence (*Anthropos teleios*). This means that the devotee's *unio mentalis* is to observe the higher aspect of his self, the imam or angel within his soul. As Corbin's (1988) stated, interpreting Mulla Sadra:

> Just as the Angels are active causes (*fa'al*), which give rise gradually to the potential existence of creatures, similarly the prophets and imams, all the Friends of God, are causes and intermediaries acting upon the potential angelicity of human beings, causing them to leave the states of animality in order to lead them to the actual angelic state that makes them beings of paradise (*ahl al-jinnat*). (p. 183)

Now, in our ritual, this translates to not only the participant's journey upward from the imaginal to the spiritual, but also, the spiritual entities coming down to meet the participants. This puts us in the imaginal realm where, according to my research, the Ashura ritual takes place in its entirety. The devotees do not go on to the spiritual realm; they meet the sun on the level of the horizon, as the *rubedo* stage suggests. The entire ritual is an active imagination.

Imam as the Center Point (*Nuqta*). For Shi'a believers, the heart is their Imam. He is the king of all the "organs" within a person. That is, he is the king of all the personal entities within an individual (angels, djinns, and humans). He not only symbolizes the lapis of the alchemists; Shi'as also see the Imam as the "stone" in the Kaabah. There is no disagreement or quarrel among the Muslims about the fact that Imam Ali was born inside the Kaabah, Islam's most revered sanctuary (*temenos*). It is said that the walls of the Kaabah split in two for Ali's mother Fatimah bint Asad to enter. Angels performed the duties of midwifery according to Fatimah bint Asad, who came out of the sanctuary after three days and delivered a sermon explaining what had happened. For it was in accords with God's will. Years later, it was Ali who used the Prophet's shoulder to mount up the Kaabah again and threw out all the pagan idols that were placed in it (360

in number, one for each day of the year). For Shi'ite *uluma* (scholars), Ali and Fatimah are naturally and symbolically the dwellers and the center of the House of God. Shi'a believers often habitually utter the words in tribulation praying to their master: "*Ya Ali madad*," meaning, "O Ali, help me." It is as if through Ali, Allah guards against the evil and misfortune from reaching Shi'as. It is Ali (just as the virgin Fatimah) who burns in the heart and washes away the believer's sin and guides him to the city of knowledge. Let me quote what Jung says alchemically about the idea of the lapis in the *temenos* that corresponds to Ali in this context, as the source of our fire and water (*aqua nostra*), parallel to the Christ with the Father in the Christian sense. Jung (1936/68c) says:

> In Islam the plan of the temenos with the fountain developed under the influence of early Christian architecture into the court of the mosque with the ritual wash-house in the centre. We see much the same thing in our Western cloisters with the fountain in the garden. This is also the 'rose garden of the philosophers,' which we know from the treatises on alchemy. . . 'The Dweller in the House' is the companion. . . analogues of the lapis, which is among other things a living being. In the Rosarium the lapis says: '*Protégé me, protegam te. Largire mihiius meum, ut te adiuvem'* (Protect me and I will protect you. Give me my due that I may help you). (p. 118)

The square building of the Kaabah and the four major gates[21] correspond to the symbol of temenos for all Muslims. For Shi'as, the temenos is not only at the sites where the *Ahl al Bayt* were born, but where their souls were liberated. The place where Paradise

[21] There are many entry gates (*bawwabat*) of *Masjid al-Haram* (sacred Mosque in Mecca).

meets Earth. The places where their spiritual bodies are on earth. The bodies of the fourteen Immaculate Ones are not like any human body. They are spiritual bodies, and these earthly locations (gravesites) serve the believers as a spiritual pilgrimage. So their souls of the pilgrims, too, can die and be reborn. Hence, naturally, these places are turned into pilgrimage sites where the Ashura ritual is performed with tremendous spiritual and psychological suffering. Imam's tombs in Iraq and Iran are architecturally designed in a similar way to the Kaabah. But this topic will lead us to beyond the subject at hand, which is coniunctio.

In Shi'ite philosophy, and hence in its psychology, the Imam is the Perfect Man (*al-insan al-kamil*) who leads his believers to salvation, as he—in all the twelve forms—has promised them on earth. This is why Corbin (1988) writes echoing a coniunctio consciousness—as if giving a sermon on a pulpit of the Ashura ritual—addressing to all Muslims, Shi'ite and Sunnis:

> Precisely because it is the kingdom of the Perfect Man as the finality of being, this kingship neither results from nor depends on political considerations that would make the Imam a mere rival of the Umayyids and the Abbasids. . . . Hence, *ipso facto*, the present relationship of the Shi'i believer with his Imam as the *pole* of his being is not a relationship with an institution of this world but a relationship with the suprasensible world. (p. 179)

Jung (1936/1968c) quoting Philalethes, writes:

> The Pole is the point around which everything turns—hence another symbol of the self. Alchemy also took up this analogy: "In the Pole is the

> heart of Mercurius, who is the true fire, wherein his master rests. . .” (p. 188)

The Shi’a consciousness in the ritual—regardless of a man’s or a woman’s education, a career position, social status, and so on—mirrors the reality of his or her imam, a conscious quality of an archetypal consciousness. One can be a psychologist, a chemist, a teacher, a doctor, a musician, a philosopher, a poet, a chef, a farmer, but the tears that flow from the heart is ultimately from a place beyond the historical events of Karbala. In Shi’ite psychology, they reveal one’s hell and suffering, a longing that strives to unite with one’s heaven. This is the reason, it is said, that Imams are among those who stand between Hell and Paradise—on the *A’raf* (Corbin, 1988).

From the Shi’ite view, the Imam is the spirit of the Prophet facing the outside world. Facing the inner divine, he stands in the world with prophecy as the *wali ullah* or Friend of God. Not all prophets are aware of their Imama in the world at first. They have to cultivate it from within. They have to do the work and then God gives them the good news. For instance, He revealed the prophecy (*nabuwwah*) and friendship (*hujjah*) to Abraham and Moses; while Adam and Jesus were born with them (Corbin, 1964; 1988). The Prophet Muhammad is a special case because not only was he the last prophet, but he combined in himself the qualities of all three: *nabi*, *rasūl*, and *imam*.

In the Shi’ite schema of ascension, *nabi* (prophet, a receiver of God’s news) is based on *rasūl* (messenger, a giver of God’s news), and *rasūl* is based on his imam (successor, interpreter, ruler, a governor of God’s news).

To add to this complexity, within these categories, subcategories are designating certain *degrees* or modalities of knowledge, each possessing the knowledge of the one

below it. They each have specific functions, all connected with the governance of the Imam. Although Ibn al ‘Arabi described these as stations of metamorphosis in his *Futūhat*, each having as many as thirty-five modalities (Chodkiewicz, 1993; Chittick, 1989), Haydar Amuli used concentric circles in his diagrams to show their outer to inner relationships (Corbin, 1986). Haydar Amuli shows the spirit of Muhammadan prophecy was to be continued with Ali, and not Jesus—which was illustrated by Ibn al ‘Arabi. He gave passed the Imamate to Ali, the spiritual authority by God’s command. In this “passing on,” there is a complicated secret, a knowledge which I cannot go into deeply here. Briefly, it is related to going from one point to the other, from crossing the horizon to see the other side of the (deeper or higher) world. It is a passing on of the individuated soul to the next soul. Corbin (1957) describes it as “the Cycle of his [the adept’s] Resurrections: the attainment of each higher degree or ‘horizon”’ (p. 95). This is the meaning of resurrection (*qiyamat*) where the famous saying of the Prophet is meditated: “He who dies, his resurrection is already risen” (Corbin, 1957, p. 95). Corbin (1957) says that this resurrection is a rhythmic law in the vertical structure of the esoteric hierarchy and it also operates in the unfolding of time (not in the sense of history but hierophany). This complex epiphanic journey of the soul leads us to the Hidden Imam who is the Resurrector (*Qa’im*) of the individuated souls—a central figure of all sages, philosophers, prophets, messengers, and imams in a cycle of Prophecy.

For the prophetic philosophers, the Imam represents the metaphysical Pen, the ink, and the Tablet, where they all are parts of one process. This is the process of writing the cosmos into existence (*apotheosis*, or Kabbalistic notion of *tikkun*, amending). In this, Intellect, the first created principle transforms, descends, and is concretized in a precious

stone. The alchemical *opus* is thus to distill and unify (*Solve et Coagula*) this immortal spirit from its transient embodiment. Therefore, we can say that the philosopher's stone, in Shi'ite thought, is the Imam, and by doing the alchemical work, he is "our" imam imaginalized, realized, *filius philosophorum*.

Psychologically, he is the projector projected, or the observer [and the] observed. But the latter, the observed, is bi-directional in that he is seen by the devotee's eyes, and God sees him—through which the participants of the ritual recognize the acts of the ritual. From our diagrammatical view, he is connected with the center and circumference of the mandala (or *coupola* in Shi'ism representing *tashbih/tanzih*). In China, he would be seen as the S shaped line between the yin and the yang—not in the clinical sense of borderline but in the sense of being on the middle path (*sirat*) or on the *A'raf* (Corbin, 1988). In Shi'ite metaphysics, he is the Pole, the eye of God (*'ayn ullah*). Personified as a person on earth, he has many titles such as king of the believers (*amir al mo'mineen*) (Al-Majlisi, 2014).

Understanding *unio mentalis* answers the second question of this study, in the Shi'ite sense of wholeness, *tawhid*, which is to acknowledge by witnessing or knowing that there is no god but God, who is the Absolute Being, the All-Knower. Psychologically this means that there is no self but the Self. What we humans think and make God to be in our "ten thousand" conceptions of the world are, first of all, "nothing but" idols or false gods without an archetypal background of symbols. It is only through the symbolic understanding, the esoteric knowledge of all the things and events of the world that we are to know God's Names. This is the secret in the teachings of all the prophets and Imams. This knowledge is the Imam himself, a symbol.

Unio Mentalis with the Body

Edinger (1995) writes that *unio mentalis* "is symbolized by Dorn as involving a twofold process. The first part is the union of soul and spirit; they unite and create the *unio mentalis*. Simultaneously, that union of soul and spirit is accompanied by a separation from the body" (p. 285). This second part [of the first coniunctio] is significant for us because, in the ritual, the believer's conscious state is not consciously dead, it is in the imaginal state, which does not mean separation from the body.

I am looking at the entire ritual from a phenomenological lens, even though the symbols point to a theoretical, imaginal, and metaphysical background. The Ashura participants are mainly performing their rites in the imaginal realm, while the rites are still grounded in the material realm. When the imaginal crosses over to the corporeal side, an image that conveys the imaginal comes into view, so we can see the subtle body symbolically.

The image of the flagellants with chains is telling. Even though, spiritually, the participants are recalling their Imam; they are anchored to their blood. The participants want to spill blood for Hussain because they want to know him through their pain, and they want him to know them. They do not desire to assimilate with their master (*maula*). They want to transform themselves in suffering for his approval.

The Shi'ite experience of the Imam is not an out-of-body experience, as I see it. It is spiritually embodied. The only way I can interpret the separation of the body in the ritual is from an epistemological way of seeing the body's transformation. Meaning that by seeing the body's situation, I can interpret what is going on psychologically.

Now, this can be explained using the *shahada* (attestation of witnessing), as done by Haydar Amuli. For him, the *shahada*, which is in three parts, is in reality one. In other words, the attestation of God, the prophecy of Muhammad, and the Imamate of Ali are only separated because of the human mind. Since humans have been separated from God, the differentiated consciousness understands by compartmentalizing. Synthesizing comes after. Hence, the Karbala images of dismemberment and cutting play an important role. They serve the believer's conscious states as an archetypal motif of *separatio*. In this cosmic sense, we are able to see the *separatio* within the *coniunctio* operation. Again, we have a paradox.

Edinger (1995), borrowing from Jung's amplification of the Osiris/Christ motif in the *Mysterium*, says about the second part of the first coniunctio that, "one of the images for that phenomenon is decapitation—beheading, separating the head from the body" (p. 285). The image of decapitation and beheading corresponds to Hussain's martyrdom at the battle of Karbala.

The *unio mentalis* in the ritual is a mental union, which is the process of individuation without the old body, without the old egoic kingly attitude. They separate the old tyrant from the soul-spirit syzygy. But this does not mean that there is no-body present at all in the ritual. This coniunctio process is about self-knowing through withdrawing projections. What I mean by the term "projection" here is in the Jungian sense, where one does something unconsciously and realizes its effect after. In this way, one brings the unconscious expression—that which was in the past acted out in the world—to consciousness. Hence, projections are always a present realization of the past. But we realize that in the ritual, the participants are not withdrawing religious projections

in the sense that they do not have knowledge of them. These projections are withheld consciously. They are worked on as moving images in the imaginal realm of the psyche.

The fantasy images of the Ashura ritual are willfully recalled into the *dhikr* (remembering) rites. It seems to me that the knowledge of the withdrawn projections is also not neglected. Because the Karbala images are "bunched up" moving images, as in the Ashura complex, they show expression. They evoke personal suffering. Hence, I believe the Ashura complex is like the ego complex where there is consciousness. It is not a complex fully inside the unconscious. However, what I think this consciousness is, is not the ego per se. It is the Imami consciousness (*Imama*) that has been imaginalized in the personal unconscious of the Shi'ite believer. The believer has to call it up to consciousness, which can be done easily in the ritual using poems and techniques of amplified and mythologized stories, active imagination, and so on. The central aspect to the Imami consciousness is not only the combination of *sharia*, *tariqa*, and *haqiqa* and their dependency upon one another, but also the idea and reality of Intellect, the first created principle. A hadith of the Prophet narrates:

> The first thing that Allah created was the 'aql (intellect) thereupon He said to it: 'Come close'; then immediately, it came closer. Then He said to it: 'Go back'; immediately it went back. Then He said: 'I swear in My Glory and My Power, I did not create any creations more beloved to Me than you (intellect); By you I take, and by you I give, by you I reward and by you I punish. (Al-Kulayni, 1978, pp. 65-66)

This Intellect,[22] we can interpret as the faculty of the Self that holds the cosmos together. It is in everything and in every category of our microcosm: spiritual, imaginal, corporeal. This faculty is the spirit per se, yet it is spiritual when it takes form according to its holder. In depth psychology it is the archetype of the soul (anima).[23]

Jung (1948/1967g) tells us in so many ways that the chief figure responsible for creating projections is the anima. And we know that the soul of our ritual, Fatimah, is linked deeply with the Muharram spirit. Shi'a Muslims name him "master Ali" (*maula Ali*), the first Imam par excellence. When the soul gets close to the body, it takes on its quality. And when it gets closer to the spirit, it takes on its quality. Jung (1948/1968g) says the same thing using alchemical language.

> "Soul" represents a higher concept than "spirit" in the sense of air or gas. As the "subtle body" or "breath-soul" it means something non-material and finer than mere air. Its essential characteristic is to animate and be animated; it therefore represents the life principle. Mercurius is often designated as *anima* (hence, as a feminine being, he is also called *foemina* or *virgo*), or as *nostra anima*. The *nostra* here does not mean "our own" soul but, as in *aqua nostra*, *Mercurius noster*, *corpus nostrum*, refers to the arcane substance. . . . However, *anima* often appears to be connected with *spiritus*, or is equated with it. For the spirit shares the living quality

[22] Intellect or *'aql* here does not mean reason in a philosophical sense.
[23] The term anima is not used here as the inner feminine aspect of a male. Here, its meaning is archetypal awareness or universal movement caused by the Self archetype.

> of the soul, and for this reason Mercurius is often called the *spiritus vegetativus* (spirit of life) or *spiritus seminalis*. (p. 213)

The old alchemists in their laboratories were very careful in keeping this volatile substance, the philosophical Mercurius, from escaping from their Hermetic vessel. Mercurius is solid *and* liquid in keeping with the alchemical nature of the element Mercury (Hg). But he is gaseous and subtle as well. He was treated from the outside as quicksilver, but from a philosophical point of view, he was simply defined as a spirit of fire. As Jung (1948/1968g) says, "since Mercuius is himself of fiery nature. . . *ignis elementaris noster naturalis ignis certissimun*. . . fire does not harm him: he remains unchanged within it" (pp. 209-210). The element of air points to the intellect, for he was "originally a wind god, and his counter part the Egyptian Thoth, who 'makes the souls to breathe,'… The texts often use the terms *pneuma* and *spiritus*" (Jung, 1948/1968g, p. 212).

Furthermore, he is also named the *prima materia* or hermaphroditic matter, sulphur, *quinta essentia*, the devil, Christ the Sol Novus, the Son of Man, *coelum* (Dorn's term for inner unity or *unio mentalis* without the body), and the Man of Light (Jung, 1948/1968g). As von Franz (1980b) suggested, in the hermetic philosophy of late antiquity—a contrast to Pauline Christianity—Mercurius was "sought [as] an unprogrammed experience of the 'inner companion' or of the daimon who showed the way" (p. 150).

Depth psychology interprets him in the following way: since he seems to be everywhere, and is also the inner guru, then he is a symbolic personification of the Self. Therefore, he holds all the secret wisdom of the unconscious. As expressed by von Franz

(1980b), he is that "which can be experienced only in a state of ecstasy. This wisdom appears to the prophet as a 'voice' wrapped in a dark garment" (p. 150).

In Islamic literature, Mercurius can be equated to the Greek god Hermes, who is homologous to the grandson of the prophet Idris (a.s), and sometimes Hermes is associated with the knowledge of Khidr (a.s). But all the symbolism of gods and prophets are the secret working of God's manifestation in the soul. Corbin (1960) has proven from Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi that this divine aspect is the emissary of the Oriental world, "the world of the sunrise. . . of inner enlightenment, and he accompanies the visionary in his inner development and realization of the godhead" (cited in von Franz, 1980b, pp. 156-157).

When Shi'a Muslims see closely the attributes of the figure of Mercurius, especially his power to speak in a voice that led humans to visionary experiences, they certainly associate him with their Imam. But in Shi'ite metaphysics, the secret to understanding his twoness is to understand his two-oneness. Von Franz (2006) puts this problem succinctly. She asked:

> In these many names for the transformation substance, there is a constant wavering between stressing its oneness and alluding to its secret doubleness: two sulphurs, arsenic and Sulphur, cock and hen, dry body and moisture, fire and water, etc. This probably alludes to the problem which all these mystics felt: does the adept in his ultimate union with God become completely one with Him, or does there remain in the coniunctio an ultimate slight separateness? (p. 116)

When looked at from the perspective of the Imam, who is a person standing in the imaginal realm, Shi'as do not have this problem. This is because, as I have given sufficient amplification when facing the material world from above, the Imam does not cease to have his spiritual substance (quiddity), and while facing the spiritual world from below the horizon or boundary (*hadd*), he does not lose his material substance. The latter can be understood from the inside or hidden (*bātin*) aspect of his personality, and the former would be from the outside, his revealed (*zāhir*) aspect.

Psychologically, this means that, in Shi'ism, a person remains a unique individual seen from the revealed (*zāhir*) aspect. By realizing the Self, however, the same person who is individuated (or not divided), stands within God. For he understands that there is nothing other than God.

In the Holy Qur'an we read: "And call not upon another god with God; there is no god but He. All things perish, except His Face. His is the Judgment, and unto Him you shall be returned" (28:88). In Shi'ism and Sufism, the reality of ego's death is *fanā*, "to die before you die." The ego is annihilated. It is martyred because the ego—as understood by psychology—is transformed (dissolved and coagulated), absorbed (*baqā*) by the realization of the truth (*Al-Haqq*).[24] In pure gold, there is no lead. Nothing is eternal save God's Face, His image in the mirror which corresponds to *hujjat ullah*, the Imam. The Imam is free from all generation and corruption of this world. He is *ma'suum* (faultless) and, therefore, the instrument of the divine holiness. The Imam's silence in speech symbolizes his divine investiture.

[24] See Louis Massignon's *The Passion of al-Hallāj*. This area of discussion within the context of the pro-Shi'ite and anti-Shi'ite debate is important for further research.

The goal of the ritual—as it is in the alchemical *opus*, and *ta'wil*—is to go from *al-zāhir* to *al-bātin* (from the outer to the inner, or from the phenomenal to the archetypal). Alchemical texts tell us that the old king dies, and a new king is born. We equate this saying to the devotee's ego shedding its skin like a snake and replacing it with a new one as ritual stages progress in the process of ascension to meet his or her imam. In the ritual, this renewal or metamorphosis is of the ego towards his or her realized imam, which is the reflection of the archetypal Imam. The *ta'wil* of the soul of the ritual is carried by the *ta'wil* of the soul of its participants.

Here, again, it seems as if there are two imams: one that resides in the collective unconscious of a Shi'a believer, and the other, the Imam as such. This is certainly the case as far as subject/object relation is concerned. For if it were not for this relationship, the idea of *coincidentia oppositorum* or even the discovery of the *mundus imaginalis* or *walayah* would not be comprehendible. However, within the psychic reality of the believer, and according to the mystical secret of the Shi'ite ontological *tawhid*, there is (and/or should be) only one Imam in principle—just as all Divine Names belong to the Name, Allah.

Just as a word or *āyah* of the Qur'an is a symbolized without losing its textual ink on the paper, even though its meaning is pursued, the adept phenomenologist, too, should understand that Imam as the person of the *walayah*—which is a pleroma or a realm between God and human that has many forms as epiphanies (*ilham*)—does not lose its *essential* substance, no matter how close he is to God. This answers the question above about the individual's uniqueness in relation to God or the ego's relationship to the Self. It is preserved because it is itself one form or expression of the many taken by the Imam.

An Imam, as a person of Twelver Shi'ism, is an image reflection of the Imam archetype (projected in the cycle of the Muhammadan period). Each Imam personage is a representation of the archetype of the *walayah*. It is just as archetypes have multivalent properties in the collective unconscious, but they all symbolize at the same time the archetype per se, that is to say, the Archetype of the Self. This also addresses my earlier question. Thus, in the ritual, the body or the image substance of the new transformed ego-personality is understood to be never lost in the ascension as it approaches a higher degree of knowing his or her imam archetype. What this implies, and what I am simply suggesting, is that what for Dorn are the first two steps of the coniunctio, in the Ashura ritual, they occur in one step as noted by Edinger (1995) and others.[25]

For Dorn, the soul leaves the body, hence a physical death. Or the soul unites with the spirit and neglects the body. In our ritual, the participants unite the soul with the spirit, not because the soul leaves the body. On the contrary, if we see it as a non-process, the spiritual light itself kills the body just as they annihilate ignorance by knowledge of the things illuminated by the rising sun. It is not that one sees the darkness, then when the sun rises, they recognize light in contrast to the darkness. Even though they can be dissected and analysed as steps of recognition. They all happen at once. Insight comes like a flash. Just as it disappears like a blink of an eye. This is the nature of Mercurius, and that is why the alchemists tried to seal him in their retort. This meant that the alchemist should not only keep the knowledge active in principle yet hidden from those who do not understand its value but also keep it from going out of consciousness. This is why the ritual happens every year. And as a consequence, therefore, in the ritual, the

[25] See. James Hillman's essay on Dionysos in *Facing the Gods*.

devotee's body is renewed not in the sense of neglect. They work on the *materia* of their soul to the end of the ritual, always having a connection to the body, no matter how subtle or elemental the process of meeting the spiritual Imam. As I shall note below, remembrance of the wounded Imam Hussain (his head and body) plays a crucial role in this.

Imam Hussain: Embodying the Tension. It is a miracle for a Shi'a believer that the hate for the Imams, which led to the Karbala tragedy, has not completely destroyed Islam. This is because all Muslims feel and intuit what Imam Hussain stood for. As al-Jibouri (1999) tells us, the most urgent motive to observe the ritual is to stand with Hussain as a warrior (attitude activated by Mars archetype). I think true Muslims do stand under and with (as opposed to standing above) the right code of conduct that was prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the Imams, that which was according to history opposed by Yazid and his father Mu'āwiya. Al-Jibouri (1999) says that the latter, "was not ruling as an individual but was representing a way of thinking which differed in nature from everything Islam stands for" (p. 32). After the Prophet, the spirit of Islam began to slip away from the minds and hearts of the faithful. It was due to the Umayyad's profane outlook of life.

Ali was side-stepped by three caliphs before Mu'āwiya managed to take the seat of the Prophet from Hassan ibn Ali. And then, Yazid succeeded his father, turning the old kingly attitude into a totalitarian rule. Modeled after the Persians and the Romans monarchs, Yazid submitted to no divine law but his own. Moreover, his most significant behavior that negated Islamic piety—besides being a drunk and a degrader of women—was an attempt to distort the Islamic doctrines, particularly the falsification of *hadith*

(sayings of the Prophet), which according to Shi'ism have infiltrated some texts to this day. This means that when one reads these texts as true, they are led unconsciously to false thinking. Psychologically, this would be the devil in the Mercurius. Al-Jibouri (1999) noted that,

> Such fabrication was quite rampant, epidemic in nature, festered by the funds available for those who rushed to please the Umayyads with their pens, those who did not hesitate to sell their religion for a trifling. (p. 33)

Many concerned Muslims witnessed this poisonous environment, which started after the Prophet's death, in the early Islamic community. In the name of Islam, with its message of *tawhid* or unity to the world as its prime principle, the people were in fact divided from within.[26] If not for Hussain's martyrdom, Shi'as believe, this environment would have destroyed the true Islamic spirit.

Jung would say that if it was not for Imami consciousness disrupting the Yazidi consciousness, Islam would have been a complete persona only, a theatrical act without spirituality, *zāhir* without its symbolic expression. This is the reason that Shi'ism is considered being the esoteric and mystical (*bātini*) aspect of Islam.

To unmask and reveal the true picture of the Yazidi consciousness was the most urgent task of Hussain. The struggle is discussed in many historical texts, which I cannot detail here. A basic outline is as follows. The early Shi'as recognized the division in Islam (civil wars between Mu'āwiya and Ali, and Aisha and Ali). After Ali and Hassan were assassinated, they gave their oath of allegiance to Imam Hussain. Something in the number of forty thousand or more people in Kufah were behind the Imam, according to

[26] See Subhani (1999) for an introduction to the message of Islam and its history.

al-Sha'bi (cited in al-Jibouri, 1999). They were asking Hussain to come to Kufah where most Shi'a people lived. This was because Ali shifted the capitol from Medina to Kufah during his brief rule. The Kufans wanted Hussain to take back his rightful place of rule via *coup d'état* in Damascus. They wrote letters (around twelve thousand a day) to Hussain in Mecca. At the time, Hussain left Medina after he was being harassed and intimidated by Amr ibn Sa'd, a general appointed to get Hussain's allegiance to Yazid. But even in Mecca, Hussain read letters saying, "Hurry and come to us, O son of the Messenger of Allah! A hundred thousand swords are in Kufah on your side; so, do not tarry" (Al-Jibouri, 1999, p. 38).

Yazid was warned by those whose interests lay with the Umayyads about Kufan influence on Hussain's decision. Hussain sent his disciple name Muslim ibn Aqeel (d. 680 CE) to Kufah, to ascertain the situation before his arrival to Kufah. The latter found the situation sound and sent a letter to Hussain that Kufans are eager to have their master. Soon after this letter was sent, however, Yazid's forces arrived in Kufah and instilled fear, persecuted citizens, raped women and children, took their property and/or taxed them, and also prisoned them. Some were even killed. Throughout this region in Damascus, those who sided with Hussain until Muslim ibn Aqeel's arrival, quickly turned. They changed their mind about the revolt. Muslim ibn Aqeel, as a result, found himself alone. He was eventually hunted and found guilty of treason. He was killed on the orders of high office and before he could send a message to his Imam, Hussain had been on the road to Kufah with his entourage. Among them were his family, Muslims, and Christians. Yazid's army intercepted the group at Karbala.

Soon after the tragedy, the Kufan people placed themselves with their martyred Imam by remembering the events every year. Ashura gatherings became mourning rites and to this day, the participants imagine themselves to be those who were supposed to protect Imam Hussain and fight for his cause, just like those forty thousand who pledged themselves to him. But because of fear threatened by tyrannical forces, at the end, when Imam Hussain needed them most, the Kufan people backed out of their promises and disowned their Imam (as if before a single cock had crowed). Shi'as mourn the death of their Imam because he was left alone on the plains of Karbala. They could easily imagine that nobody gave him or his family comfort or a drop of water. Like Christ on the cross, helpless loved ones watched his soul and body suffer. The killers took his head as a trophy to Yazid in Damascus, and his body filled with arrows, was first trampled by horses, then left behind unburied. The enemy raced to rob the ladies as they ran with their hair uncovered. "Scarves were snatched, rings were pulled out of fingers, earrings were taken out, and so were ankle-rings" (Al-Jibouri, 1999, p. 63). Ibn Sa'd ordered the heads to be severed from the martyred bodies. He distributed them to various tribes used as means to seek favor with Ibn Ziyād (Al-Jibouri, 1999). Al-Jibouri (1999) names 65 heads distributed to specific tribes, and also the names of those who handled the envoy.

The image of decapitated heads haunts the participant in the ritual, especially the telling of narratives in the *dhikr* ceremonies, for the imagination splits in two: one part with Hussain's head, the other, with his body at Karbala. It is mythologized that Hussain buried all the martyred companions of the *Ahl al Bayt*. But he was the only one left unburied.

Hussain's body was buried by the fourth Imam Zain al Abideen (a.s) and Zaynab. There is an interesting Shi'ite doctrine that says that only an Imam can bury an Imam. Shi'a participants recall the image of Zaynab crying over the body with emotive poetry. And the young Imam who stands next to them symbolizes a new beginning, a new cycle of Imamate. Al-Jibouri (1999) gives references to many texts that on the fortieth day of Imam Hussain's death, his head was "returned to his body" (p. 120)[27]. But what happened to Hussain's head is a mystery.

Archetypally, however, the image of Hussain's body with Zaynab mirrors the myth of Isis where she collects the dismembered Osiris. Because Isis, as von Franz (2006) told us, "is one who collected the scattered limbs of his [Osiris'] body and bathed them with her tears and laid them in a secret grave beneath the bank of the Nile" (p. 103). Von Franz further wrote about Isis:

> Apuleius stresses the blackness of her robe (*palla nigerrima*: robe of deepest black), and since ancient times she was reputed to possess the elixir of life as well as being adept in sundry magical arts. . . She appears as a teacher of alchemy. (p. 103)

Zaynab, too, learned alchemy from her mother, Fatimah (according to many sermons and the Jabirian corpus, which is connected with the Sixth Imam). And there are stories about Hussain's head ending up in Egypt. And here, we see the mother-daughter archetype reappear as Venus or the mother quality of the materia,

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[27] In Shi'ism and [in depth psychology], the number 40 is significant symbolically, in which we can not engage. The fortieth day marks the basis for *ziyārat al-arba'een*—an event that takes place annually at the Shrine of Imam Hussain at Karbala. It is the largest religious gathering in the world.

the body. Von Franz (2006) interpreted this moment psychologically as referring to:

> The stage when the masculine spiritual principle of consciousness has died, and the feminine principle of nature and the unconscious takes over and rules over a mysterious process of spiritual transformation and resurrection. The result is the birth of Horus, a new savior figure. (p. 104)

Linking the image further, although scholars cannot say anything definitive about who or when Hussain's headless body was buried, we should note in passing that not only symbolically but also literally as well, Hussain's burial site, which serves as a pilgrimage site, is in two places on Earth: one at Karbala where his body rests and the other in Cairo, near the Nile, where his head was taken after it was found buried elsewhere for 220 to 250 years. The latter's location is open for debate. My visit to the tomb—across from Al-Azhar University yet sitting next to Khan el-Khalili Bazaar—shows that many Shi'a and Sunni Muslims believe it is truly the *maqam al Hussain*. The tomb's position symbolizes the intellectual and somatic need of being. It is a pilgrimage site for thousands, including Muslims and non-Muslims.

Shi'as, in the ritual, embody the split image of Hussain's body psychologically. They express the symbolism for this in the ceremonies of *mātam* (beating and cutting). Though the adept who desires knowledge and reason in the ritual, cannot fully understand his or her emotive position (Ashura complex). These people are at the *maqām* or station of the *tariqa*, which is beyond the corporeal desire, who are beyond the people who only follow the *sharia*. The beating of the believers is symbolic to his or her *hāl* or conscious

state, corresponding to the *prima materia* in the Greater *coniunctio*, in the imaginal, with the body and spirit.

The Shi'a participants, especially the youth who practice an extreme form of flagellation, according to my interpretation, do not hold a docetic notion of Imam Hussain—as only a spiritual reality that did not actually suffer physically, but only appeared to do so. Even if one has an archetypal eye for the dramaturgy in the ritual, one gets captured by the acts of others in such a way that one comes back and connects to the Ashura complex, which helps to re-integrate with the body. In a salvific gesture of their desire to form and integrate—via active imagination—the participants experience Hussain's physical suffering. For the believer, Hussain's predicament is, after all, "our" predicament, if we are to stand for and in his *Hussainiāt* spirit.

Hussain's active imagination is described in many texts by Shi'ite scholars. According to Al-Majlisi (2014), Abu Mikhnāf, a historian among others, recorded that Imam Hussain saw the Prophet in a vision before leaving Medina at his grandfather's tomb. We should pay attention to this moment of Imam's earthly predicament, which is similar to Jesus (a.s) at Gethsemane, or to the prophet Job with Yahweh. It is reported that Hussain spent two entire nights at the Prophet's tomb praying and having intermittent conversations with God. The second-night prayer reads:

> Allah! This is the resting-place of Your beloved Prophet Muhammad (a) and I am his grandson. You know well the present situation in which I am, and you know what is in the inner most of my heart. I invoke You, Lord, to keep me by the grace of this holy place firmly steadfast in my pursuit of

> whatever meets Your Pleasure and the Pleasure of Your Prophet. (Al-Jibouri, 1999, p. 35)

A reply came from the Prophet (which is telling cosmologically):

> Come to me, O Hussain! Come to me, go by and pass through the torturous stage of martyrdom and claim the position reserved for you. The Lord, Allah, will resurrect me, your parents, your elder brother (al-Hassan) and yourself at the same time and gather us all at the same place on the Day of Judgment. (Al-Jibouri, 1999, p. 35)

This "same place," the Prophet is speaking of is the pleromatic realm of the *walayah*, which has a terrestrial pole on earth at the Prophet's tomb.

Having traversed the stages of the arc of ascent to the spiritual world, the adept believer makes his or her way back down to the body via the arc of descent. The believer's conscious state (*hal*) is ceremonially placed into a stronger position, to a spiritual domain, to experience the archetypal unity of Fatimah and Hussain *ibn* (son of) Ali, in the Shi'ite sense.

The Shi'a participants in the ritual do not integrate with the Imam. This is because, as said earlier, they remain in their own bodies. However, the reintegration of the ego-body happens on the plane of the subtle body, in the imaginal realm where the spirit or intellect penetrates the physicality of their soul. This body-soul-spirit is the renewed person, a realized conscious being who is seeing with a new paradigm. The union with the body therefore means that the archetypal Imam is seen or recognized within oneself. One's own devotion to the Imam transforms the individual into a representative of him. He participates in his own mystical pole.

In depth psychology, we read that "the ego *can never integrate the Self* but only bow before it and try to relate to it in the right way" (von Franz, 1980b, p. 158). The Ashura participants sacrifice their freedom of thought, their self-ego body, to change (*metanoia*) their perspectives by withdrawing all projections of reality to unite with the *imami* or *Hussainiyāt* attitude. Acknowledging this attitude is *unio mentalis* with the body in the Shi'ite sense.

From a modern perspective, we can tell the love for *Alh al Bayt* does take some participants to literally sacrifice their bodies. But is it possible that some participants symbolically do it, while others do it just for the sake of suffering? One can suffer in the knowledge of the tragedy, indeed. And that is enough, that psychological suffering is more torturous and painful than the bodily suffering for some Shi'as. But the extremely devout persons in the ritual can also answer that our desire to ascent to our Imam is with the body, literally.

Some participants never reach the symbolic. They perhaps, as noted by Flaskerud (2010) do it to show off their piety, especially to women who are simply watching men perform the flagellation acts in Mars-like fashion. Symbolically, however, this means that even when the believer of this ritual reaches a deeper meaning of a symbol, psychologically, he or she does not lose sight of the *zāhiri* reality of the ritual.

For a believer to leave the realm of his angelic state (imaginal category of the personal *and* the collective unconscious), he or she requires a much greater faith or reincarnation. Shi'ite scholars reserve this station for only a few persons who can cross the *malakut* (the world of the angels) into the *jabarut* (the world of power) in a specific way (*tariqa*).

Almost all devotees in the Ashura ritual always remain in the imaginal realm, as I see it. They do not cross to higher stations. Their souls receive the beneficence of the spiritual world (*tajalli*) through the Imam, so that they can easily come back to their own ego reality, to the corporeal world. But those who are the elite spiritualists with awesome faith, have a numinous experience in an ecstatic trance like state. They lose their own selves completely for a longer period of time. Unlike those who only receive flashes of insight, for them, the Ashura experience is not a complex. Their whole being is one—mind and body. And it is possessed by the Muharram spirit. This would be the *unio mentalis* with the body in a reverse way, where a pathological behavior is seen.

Now, this dual or cyclical expression of *unio mentalis* and *unio mentalis* with the body can be associated in the ritual rites, especially in the sermons and of bloody *mātam* ceremonies, which are acts of retribution and atonement of fervent devotees that make their bodies suffer. They self-flagellate with knives (usually five knives chained together in a wooden handle), these extreme devotees cut the middle of their heads with a heavy sword. They cut deep to bleed and also cut their chest with shaving blades. All this happens with *noha khani* in the background, a sort of emotional frenzy centered on the memories of the bloody events of Karbala. '*Ya Hussain*, *Ya Hussain*,' O Hussain, O Hussain are the chants repeated as the sufferer drowns himself in blood.

They are bloody and awful to an onlooker. The whole thing is frightening, which terrorizes the soul unaware of the power of the dark side of archetypal Mercurius. However, when seen closely, it is remarkably numinous for the lovers of Hussain and the *Ahl al Bayt*.

In the dark, the alchemist finds gold. And thus, here as well, we can see this as art. This is because the product represents active imagination with more unconscious energy. This leads to pathological behavior looked at from the outside. But from the inside, that is to say, from the perspective of the believers, the moving images and fantasies of his Imami consciousness, yields a warrior type form, and is brought down to earth, and to his body itself.

The participant symbolizes the murder of Imam Hussain (and his companions), especially the decapitation of his head, and the aftermath of the trampling of his body by the horses of Yazid's army. Hence, the images on earth serve as the loci of manifestation. They serve as miracles, grace, and distribution of merit (*sawab*) from the master (*maula*), who himself is the mystical Pole. On the one hand, the beating and cutting of the body allow the adept's soul to separate and unite with the spirit. On the other hand, at the same time, the powerful memories (images) of the Imam's body remind the soul (and spirit) to call back to the earth of Karbala. These ceremonies are held in the Muharram processions and it is common to witness the participants avail themselves of these rites and emblems (*'alam*, *tābūt*). They serve, in addition to other processional symbols of the ritual, the tragedy of Karbala.

Unus Mundus

> The *unus mundus*, writes Samuels, Shorter, and Plaut (1986)
>
> is a world view which is essentially at odds with causal explanation. The focus is on relations existing between 'things' rather than on the 'things' themselves, and, further, on the relations between relations. It is necessary

> to remember that the *unus mundus* is not a device but the background of attempts to discern meaning. (p. 158)

The world view of depth psychology itself is sort of split in two ways: monotheistic and polytheistic. This is because when the psyche zooms out its attention from a particular to the universal, one moves to see the world, and everything in it, as a whole. In this process, everything is interconnected as organs or parts of an organism. For some psychologists, such as James Hillman (d. 2011), this world view loses "the vitality of the pluralistic psyche, which tends to find expression in 'sparks' or fragments" (Samuel, Shorter, & Plaut, 1986, p. 158).

We learn in depth psychology that the ego in the coniunctio transmutes by self-knowledge. A depth psychological approach to Shi'ism and its symbols tells us it is the subjective ego, the self, who learns about the objective reality of the Imam, the Self. The terms Self and Imam are just one of many words that carry similar symbolic expressions. The simplest of them in Shi'ite philosophy is named the Perfect Man. It is within this perfection that *tawhid* or oneness is understood. In other words, God's light and its many (pluralistic) manifestations reveal to mankind His divine secrets via the prophets and Imams—who are the representatives of the Perfect Man.

Psychologically, the adept realizes that all the forms of archetypal luminaries (shadow figures, anima, animus, wise old man) are in potential one reality. But they have a locution or specific function within the psyche. Their own perfection depends on the existential background. In other words, in order for the outer man to reach perfection, he must realize the perfection of his inner man, his prophet. And if the inner man, his exoteric Imam, wants to realize his perfection, then he must realize the perfection of his

esoteric Imam, who is connected with God (who has an inner and outer aspect, *tashbih/tanzih*). When this realization happens, we see that all the archetypal forces not only have a double aspect to them; they have a role to play in the dramaturgy of the life of the ritual. The archetypal forces, as principles, are all connected to one another and the Self. They are working in union with each other harmoniously, as actors of a play. Because as "Ripley says: 'The coniunctio is the uniting of separated qualities or an equalizing of principles'" (cited in Jung, 1955-56/1970a, p. 3). The adept finds this unifying principle as an objective thing, and he names it 'the philosophers' stone.

Now that the adept has realized the Self, two events can take place in the psyche. The first is summed up by von Franz (1992). She writes:

> It is not enough to have become aware of the Self's existence, it is necessary to go on living with it, of acting from this center instead of from the ego. That is where the river of time comes in our dream and with it the realization that the Self is alive and ever-changing, as well as solid and still. And both belong to the Self: the "shit" of our transient everyday life and the invisible luminous point which is the "face of God," the resting pivot in all changes. (p. 126)

The second is described by Jung (1955-56/1970a). He tells us that after all said and done, the work of, or "the subject of transformation is not the empirical man, however much he may identify with the 'old adam," but Adam the Primordial Man, the archetype within us. . . . Adam Kadmon" (p. 453).

Now these two assertions reveal the *telos* of the individuation process. They point to the other side of our being, the unconscious inner man. We must recognize the other

side, for if we do not, Jung tells us it appears to us from the outside—often with a negative effect.

However, from the perspective of the Ashura ritual, since the inner man also has two sides to himself, he comes, as if to say from his good side as well, to guide us and suffer with us. He is not Allah, the Absolute Being. He is humanity's master, the archetype of humanity who transforms for us and with us in the process. In reality, it is his dark side that we are working to eliminate. All this time, going through the alchemical stages, the adept may think that what is being transformed is himself, which now appears as half true. But he discovers through self knowledge that a cosmic drama of *tanzih*/*tashbih* (the opposites in God) is being enacted with passion within his humanity. This passion is, for Ibn Umail, an attitude (von Franz, 2006)—an Imami consciousness of Man of Light, *lapis philosophorum*, *imago dei*, or the inner totality. This consciousness is *unus mundus*, one reality or *tawhid*. It does not refuse the agony that comes from those who only see one side of God, those who bicker and howl, and in the end murder. On the contrary, as exemplars of so many in history—from Socrates to Suhrawardi, from Mani to Christ, from Hypatia to Bruno—this psychic power does not run away and hide, rather, it faces evil and sacrifices the temporal self for truth.

Counter-intuitive to our logic, which is like a drop of water to the cosmic ocean of knowledge, this metaphysical consciousness is dancing within the rhythms of our hearts. First of all, in Shi'ite thought, nobody can transform the Self per se, the stone is unchangeable; it is immutable (*tanzih*) no matter how expensive or technologically advanced one's laboratory equipment. The alchemists never tried to change the stone. Their entire opus was to find one. The idea was to change the subjective self, our

perspectives, the multiplicities of our conceptions and opinions, to see what is objectively true. As the adept reach the center, the concreteness and unchangeability of the stone became more rigid. The idea was through this stone, other objects can be transformed, immortalized, or turned to gold. This is because, it, as paradoxical as it sounds, itself is the first principle, the principle of change, like Aristotle's unmoved mover. It is like the evolutionary process which itself cannot change or evolve. The process, and/or its laws, do not apply to itself. Why? Because this concrete stone is no thing. It is a spirit.

Shi'ite metaphysics is not incommensurable with human reason. It does not attempt to know the immutable God, the *deus absconditus*. For He is absolutely unknown and unique. Shi'ism takes that knowledge which is given to man as *deus revelatus* through the Prophet Muhammad and all the prophets that came before him. Shi'ite metaphysics focuses on a hierarchical structure of the transmission of divine knowledge. It points to the numinous experience of mankind via the medium of angels or archetypes, bridging the man-God relationship (*tashbih*, *ta'til*) into a union (see Figure 13).

These angels are multiple personalities, specific to the empirical structure of mankind and their relations with God. Psychologically, this means that they are light sparks within the collective unconscious responsible for experiential knowledge of our ego and the Self. They are archetypal dominants, expressing life in our personal complexes, yet they are closer to the Self. They have their own body substance made of light (*nūr*) or consciousness. This latter is not their own possession. It is carried by the Self, the Consciousness of all consciousnesses, Light of lights, as sustenance of life. This is why angels are trapped in the enantiodromial condition of the sometimes heroic and sometimes tragic. Because they are trapped between the tension of God and Man.

When Jung speaks of suffering, he is not talking about external suffering. He is pointing to something much deeper, the spiritual suffering of the gods, where it is us human beings who are abusing them, and not the other way around. If lapis philosophorum is the symbol of the Self, then, in a way, it is the human that drowns and burns, dismembers and pulverizes it. "The original of this may be the dismemberment of Osiris and Dionysus" (Jung, 1955-56/1970a, pp. 272-273). *Immense effort* is required to find the experience of a god, my god, your god, our god, let alone the God. But Corbin (1988) reminds us that the revealed aspect of God in human knowledge is the knowledge of meaning that destroys ignorance. As a philosopher, he writes down the Shi'ite perspective and importance of understanding the *unus mundus*:

> This human meaning of all human knowledge of God is recapitulated in the dictum, "he who knows himself knows his Lord". Now, we could not pass from one element of this sentence to the other if the Imam were not the form of knowledge of the self, the form by virtue of which a relationship was established between the human subject and the *absconditum*. The truth of this dictum is then established as through an interiorization of Imamology: The imam *is* the human meaning of all human knowledge of God. For to know and recognize the Imam (not only a certain one of the Twelve Imams but also each of the Twelve and the entire group of Twelve in their essence and their pre-eternal theophanic function) is to avoid the double trap to which *tawhid* is exposed and the implistic monotheism to which common people and theologians alike succumb, the double trap of *ta'til* and *tashbih*. (p. 170)

A person on the path of knowing must "kill" *all* the multiple impurities that surround the meaning of his or her true angelicity. Meaning is the key to understanding any image. In Shi'ite philosophy, Imam symbolizes meaning as such, especially the esoteric aspect of the Words of God (*Kalam Allah*). Without him, that is, without meaning, the shape of the word is dead. It is not a living symbol. It is just a blot of ink that represents nothing. It is not the locus of manifestation. It is in this sense that the psyche leaves the physicality of the word, the body, and moves toward meaning. Because images have a story to tell us, they are not static. They have a soul. Their multiplicities are, for Jung and Shi'a philosophers, moving images within, they are fantasies, but they are sacred and not profane. They all point to an archetypal purpose, a *telos* of the dictum 'know thyself'.

We "kill" the images, so to speak, as not to get trapped by their spellbinding literalism. By seeing them with our conscious sacrifice, we see them as symbolic; and by complementing or mirroring them, we understand them by withdrawing projections. But it is to be noted and kept in mind that we do this by the commands of the unconscious or Self's obligatory law. It is not that we have archetypes. Von Franz (1980) uses the image of mirrors to explain the psyche's reflection of the Self. Where she notes that it is the Self, the ordering principle, that withdraws projections and re-collect "scattered units or sparks of light into an ordered, centered unity" (p. 169). This is the operation of *coniunctio* in the imaginal. In that sense, it is archetypes that have us. For "we" are all individual egos, making up a field of collective consciousness with the world.

The adept at this stage of *unus mundus* purifies the *materia* of his or her soul, and in the process purifies the world, what was then a projected yield, now becomes an inner

realized content as one's own incorruptibility. The *rubedo* stage is about seeing without projections. It is about seeing the anima and animus play out in the drama of life. It is about listening to them and accepting the other. It is about having a dialogue with sincerity.

One does not live in a oneness, where everything is interconnected without interpreting. In Shi'ism, as stated above, this awareness is *ma'arifa*, or direct knowledge of the self. That is the imami consciousness in the *ta'wil*. His imam becomes a mirroring reflection of the Imam, an objective person of the *walayah*. The knowledge needed to see God is to see His treasures, his Face (*hujjah*), which is reflected in the mirror of the *walayah*, the Imam. By knowing the Imam, the believer knows Him. That is to say, when all the light sparks or meanings are re-collected in an understanding of the Imam, the primordial Light, the creation of the work come to an end with the product of a man of light, who realizes the meaning of *tawhid*, professing (*shahadah*) the religion of the one eternal *walayah*.

It is the archetypal Imam, the esoteric prophet that stands between the empirical man and God. In fact, he stands between all opposites, all "isms" and also all Names of God (*ism*). As noted, he is the glue that unites. For he understands the meaning of *tashbih/tanzih*. Therefore, we can say that it is the Imam that unites all people in one world (*unus mundus*). But this Imam, Shi'as believe, is a consciousness of humanity hidden within. He is the "Hidden Imam". For Twelver Shi'ism, he is the son of the eleventh Imam, Hassan ibn Ali al-Askari (a.s) (d. 874 CE).

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The alchemical stages of the *nigredo*, the *albedo*, and the *rubedo*, helped me to *understand* a phenomenon of the soul's corresponding step-by-step journey from the corporeal to the imaginal, and the spiritual abode.[28] In the Shi'ite gnosis (*ma'arifa*), this threefold notion of the soul is imaginalized as hypostatic states of knowing the Imam, which encompasses the totality of one's personal being. This being is understood as the Friend of God, holding the esoteric secrets of the Oneness (*tawhid al-bātin*).

This study has attempted to demonstrate that Shi'a devotees hold the tension of their doctrinal understanding (*logos*) and religious love (*eros*) within their inner self. We see this in the participants' ceremonial acts, which result from the memories of a tragedy. For them, the members of the *Ahl al Bayt* are important persons to love because through embodying their psychic suffering, they understand the meaning of life. For them, behind the process of suffering, lays the wholeness of the psyche, and this led the study to the integral concept of the *walayah*.

I have proposed that the devotees' psyche through the process of active imagination progressively moves closer to their subjective imam who is, as Corbin (1986) has illustrated, the foundational object of the *walayah*, the Imam, which I believe in depth psychology represents the Jungian *archetype* of the Self. This archetype can be said to be everywhere and nowhere, equating with Corbin's notion of the *mundus imaginalis*.

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[28] For *understanding* to be a phenomenal spiritual fact, see Corbin (1995), chapter on "Comparitive Spiritual Hermeneutics."

I have shown that in the Ashura ritual, the devout love for the *Ahl al Bayt*, especially for Fatimah, transforms the shadow side of the soul's carnal instincts. To approach nearness to the true Imam—the spirit of the ritual—the religious eros within Shi'a Muslims is purified by the ritual initiation rites. The rites prepare the heart, breaking the bonds attached to the "ten thousand" idols of the world. The soul, in a state of being neutral (*unio neutralis*), at this moment is separated from the world. Hubris is transmuted into a martyrdom attitude that gives up worldly status in society.

What I mean by martyrdom here is not a detachment from reality, but like migration. This migration (*hijra*) is from one's bodily desires and also all the uncertainties of other negative influences, especially from those people with a rebellious nature, and an attitude toward polemics (Shi'ite/Sunni, Islam/Christianity, East/West, science/religion, and so on).

By casting out and swiftly cutting with the alchemical sword trapped impurities and habitual dogmas that cloud the mind, a feeling of freedom is gained and a sincere (*khulūs*) devotion to *Hussainiyāt* (Imam Hussain's path to God) is adopted. This brings the devotees even closer to the goal of the ritual, which is to know his or her imam (Self) authentically.

The ritual attitude of head beating, initiated in the Greater work, is homologous to and symbolizes the first coniunctio, the *unio mentalis*, where it is in this state that much of the refined consciousness is further transformed and moves further inward in the imaginal (isthmus or *barzakh*) to unite with the archetypal presence—the spiritual love of the Prophet's family. However, at this point (which can also lead a personality to break and cause pathology), there is also an outward archetypal movement that extends a hand,

as it were, possessing the adept. This causes the energy in the psyche to increase, creating a trance state, that results in an extreme cathartic frenzy, leading participants to the flagellants and thinking of walking on fire.

The spiritual love for the *Ahl al Bayt* is like the sunrise in one's soul. This inner sun can become dangerous for the lover because it can burn the ego completely. It can lead to psychosis if not brought to consciousness properly. Because if experienced carelessly, that is, without religious rules, then it can annihilate the devotee's connection to exterior reality. Or it can cause the ego to become too weak to deal with exterior reality. Although the latter can appear to have a righteous side, that is, revealing the ego's weakness may seem to nurture the soul, this powerful attitude should not be abused in a self-sabotaging way to one's detriment. The light of the inner sun is for guiding the ego, not debilitating it.

A hadith of the Prophet says: "I am leaving two things for you as a guide: the Qur'an and *Ahl al Bayt*". They are equal in the sense of their spiritual power. When Muslims read the Qur'an, they do *vudū* (purification) not only of their body but also of their mind and heart. A person's intention (*nīyat*) and careful attention (*murāqabat*) are essential to gaining any merit or value for living life according to its precepts. Because if the Holy Book of God is read without a symbolic attitude, it can lead to literalism. We can say that the Qur'an—which is the corporeal manifestation of the Fur'qan (its archetypal criterion)—has many degrees to its knowledge and being.

One cannot gain any spiritual knowledge from a negative point of view. Many people open the Holy Book to find faults in it. One cannot steal the Qur'an from a mosque, for instance, even if one believes in its flawlessness. The more one reads it, the

more one strays from the path because within the soul, one knows the act was amoral. The magical power of the book works with one's self-reflection, with the mirroring process of the psyche. This knowledge is gained by contemplating on the nature of being a human. It can not be gained in a laboratory. This is why the alchemists had two rooms: a laboratory and a library. Without contemplation, a Shi'ite believer can project one's immense power of love onto the Prophet's family so much so that one forgets all sense of reality. Religion, in this case, becomes lopsided, possessed by archetypes.

I have looked at sunlight in the color symbology of the alchemical operations. However, I think my psychological analysis of it lacked deeper meaning in the sense of human suffering. Also, I could not discuss fully the motif of sacrifice, compared with the prophet Job and Imam Hussain. Another aspect of this study that was unfulfilled was to see how the transformation of the Ashura ritual in history affected different cultures. This is because the soul of this study did not allow for too much history, the study stayed away from the deeper political issues. I focused on how transformation in the ritual's imaginal and spiritual states takes place. From this we can discern the Shi'ite consciousness or the Karbala Paradigm as evidence in history, and understand from the perspective of the communal feeling based on this paradigm, which has contributed to the transformation of cultures.

For Shi'as (and Sufis), just as our physical eyes cannot see the Sun's blinding light, our consciousness cannot understand God's self-disclosure (*tajallī*). Our consciousness perceives by seeing the moon's phases, we understand the numinosum by looking at her; we can similarly know the symbolic function of archetypes, God's self-disclosure within our personal moon.

In Shi'ite philosophy, a believer's struggle of going from a state of material consciousness to the spiritual world is thus a religious endeavor, one that requires patience, tolerance, and unification. More psychic energy is required to keep the Ashura ritual alive than to destroy it. The alchemists, too, knew this latter attitude in a form of the destructive power of fire. This is why the alchemical heat was used in a controlled way, subtly and gently.

Psychologically, suffering makes available a higher and more subtle form of knowledge. This is because suffering in the ritual is inseparable from an integral understanding of the Imamate, and therefore of one's religion—which is love for oneself and thus the Other. Suffering corresponds to alchemical purification or psychological realization of the elixir or gold consciousness. Gold symbolizes the central idea of *tawhid* or oneness in Shi'ite alchemy, and wholeness in depth psychology.

The Ashura ritual imparts gnosis, a religion of love, which unites states of being with modes of knowing—a psychological unification that corresponds to the *coniunctio* of the alchemical Sol and Luna, King and Queen. In Shi'ism, love is determined by the soul of the sacred marriage of Fatimah and Ali—the two cosmic principles. Imam Hussain symbolizes this love. Like the rising sun, the love of and for *Ahl al Bayt* renews awareness of suffering, and suffering renews the soul's awareness of its archetypal essence, the inner imam, the Self.

Diagrams

All Diagrams are drawn and labeled by the author.

A Model of the Psyche

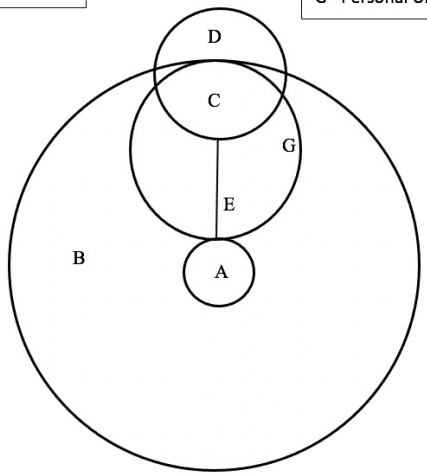
Figure 1.

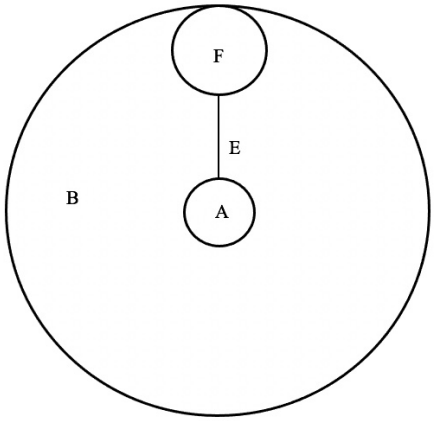
Shi'ism

A - Cosmic God/Being
B - The World of Spirits
C - The World of Imagination
D - The Corporeal World
E - Direct Path or Bridge to God/*tashbih*

Jungian Psychology

A - Unified Layer/Psychoid
B - Collective Unconscious
C - Unconscious side of the Ego-Complex
D - Conscious side of the Ego-Complex
E - Ego-Self Axis
F - Ego-Complex
G - Personal Unconscious





Sufism/Shi'ism

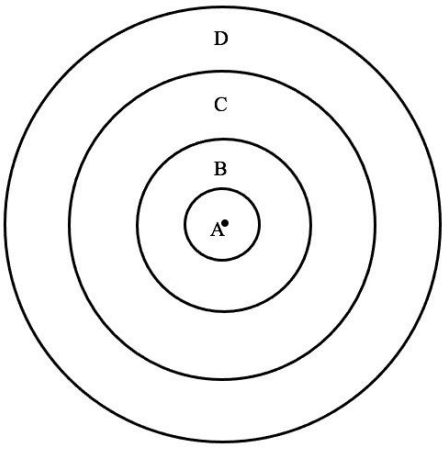
A - Cosmic Godhead/Being
B - The World of Spirits
C - The World of Imagination
D - The Corporeal World

Mandala Symbol
Figure 2.

Jungian Psychology

A - Unified Layer/Psychoid
B - Collective Unconscious
C - Personal Unconscious
D - Ego-Consciousness

Tanzih



Tashbih

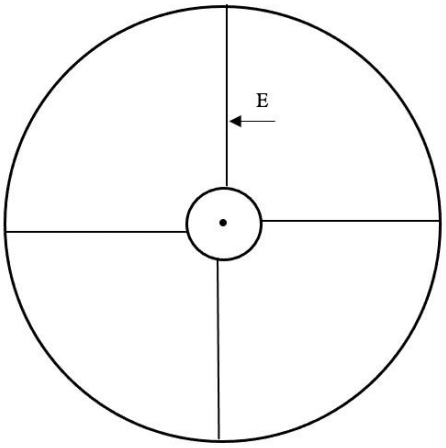
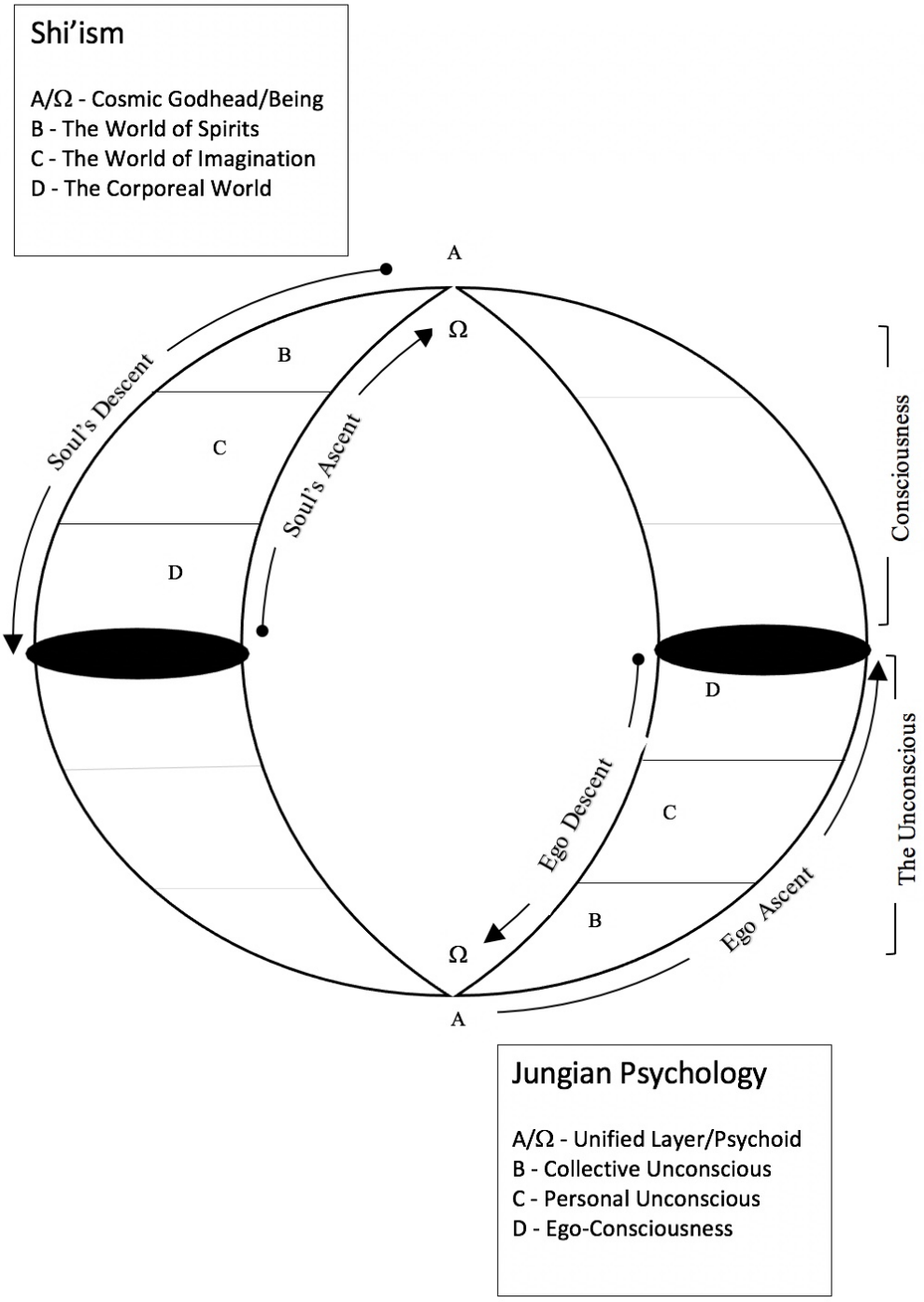


Figure 3. The Two Arcs of Soul's Journey.



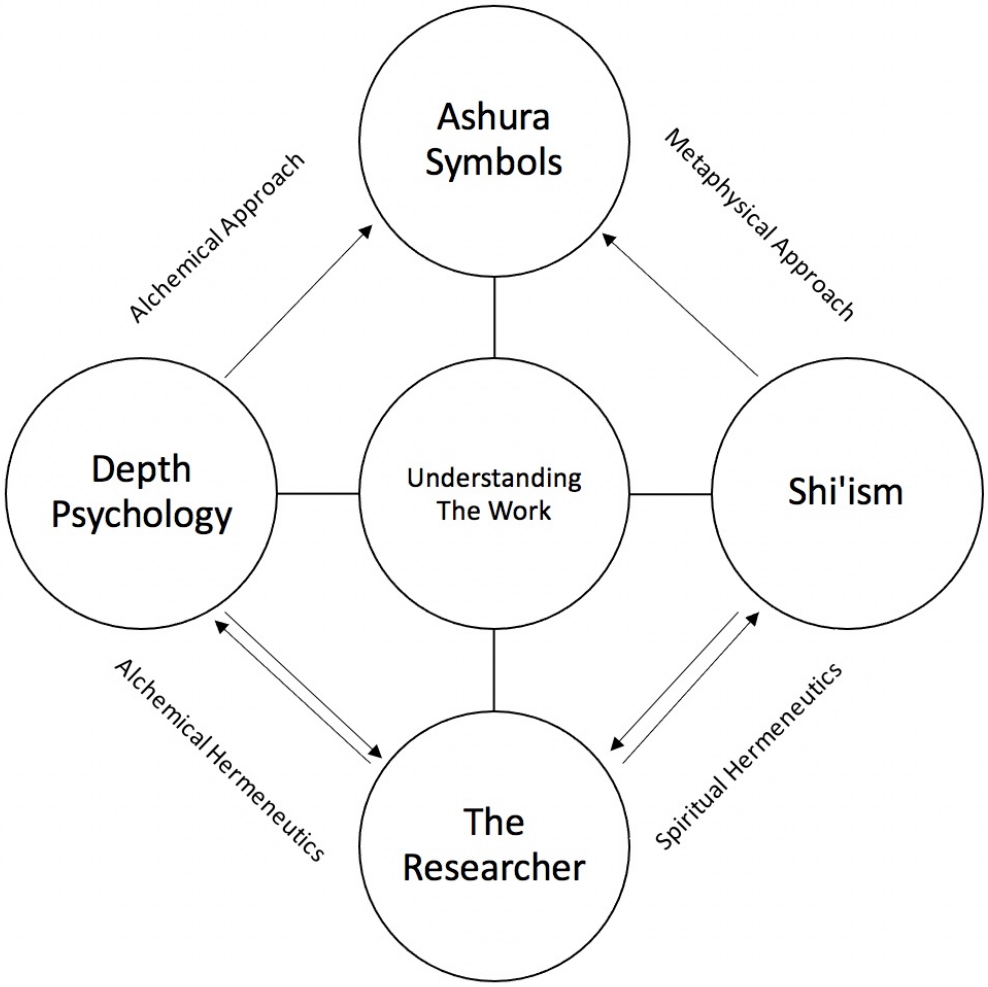


Figure 4. Research Approaches and Methods.

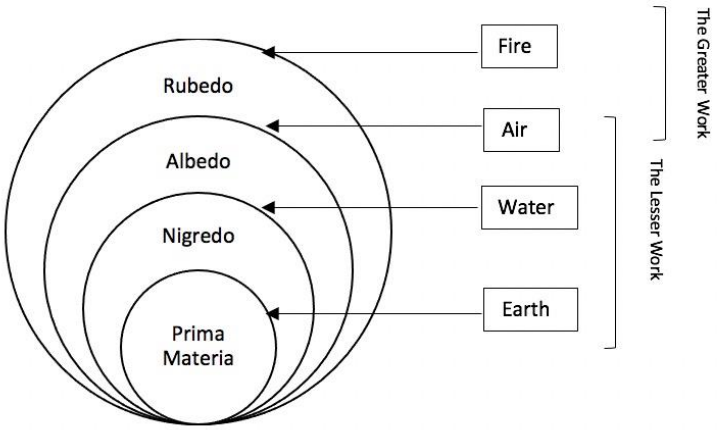


Figure 5. The Spiritual Ascension in Shi'ism and philosophical. alchemy.

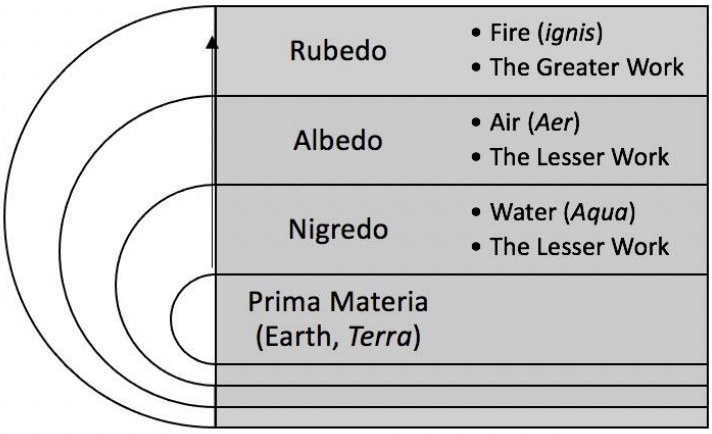


Figure 6. Alchemy stages of the work according to the nature (density) of elements.

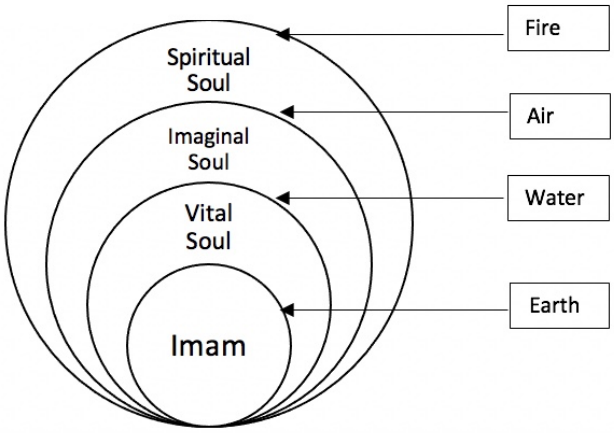


Figure 7. Inner categorical states of the soul according to Shi'ism.

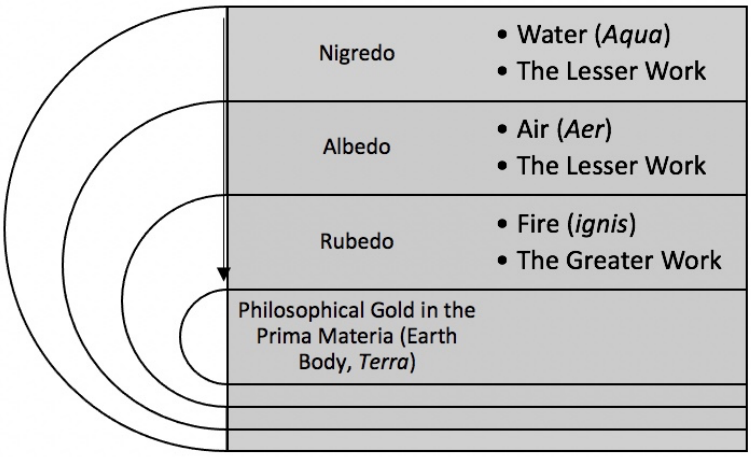


Figure 8. Stages of psychic transmutation toward the unconscious according to the reverse approach of Jung's psychology.

Mercury Quicksilver	*Lead* Saturn	*Jupiter* Tin	*Moon* Silver	*Venus* Copper	*Mars* Iron	*Sun* Gold

Figure 9. Elements and their corresponding planets.

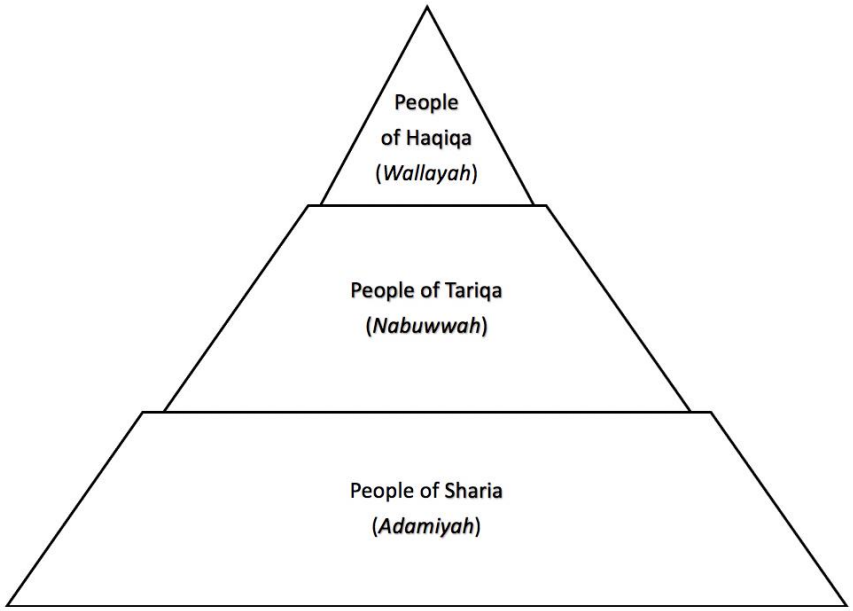


Figure 10. Three groups of Muslims according to Haydar Amuli, which alludes to sectarian differences.

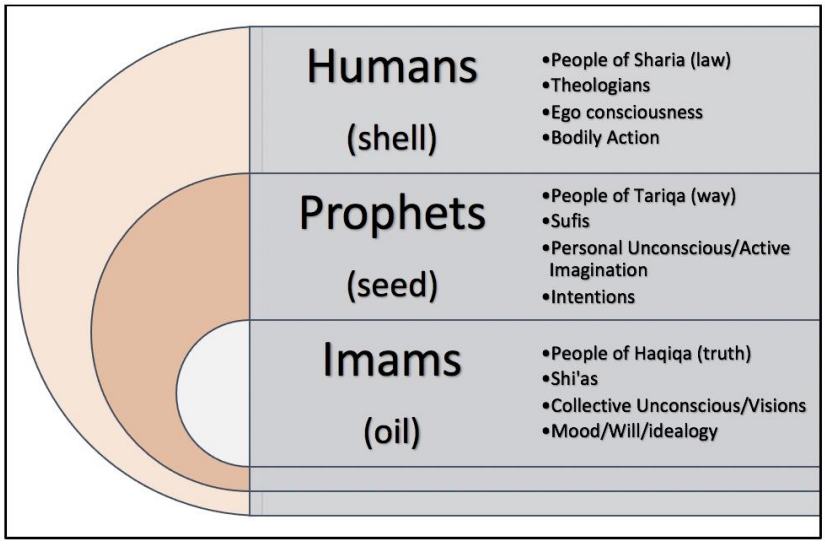


Figure 11. Almond nut metaphor of Haydar Amuli alluding to the inner journey.

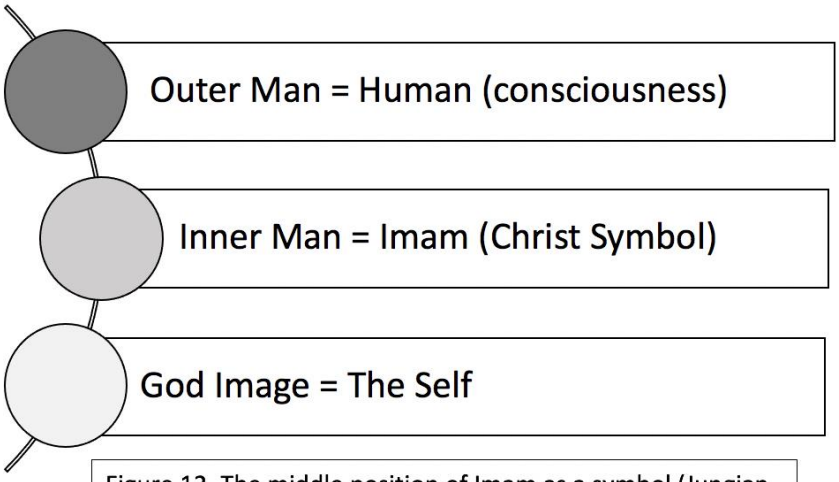


Figure 12. The middle position of Imam as a symbol (Jungian Perspective).

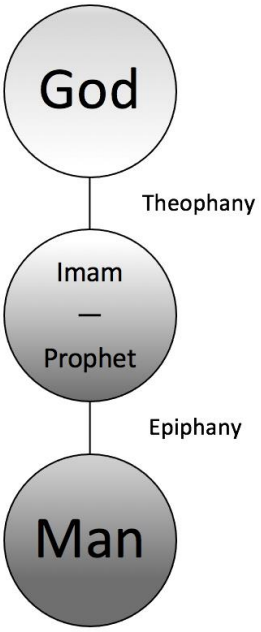


Figure 13. Shi'ite metaphysical perspective of the revealed God (*deus revelatus*).

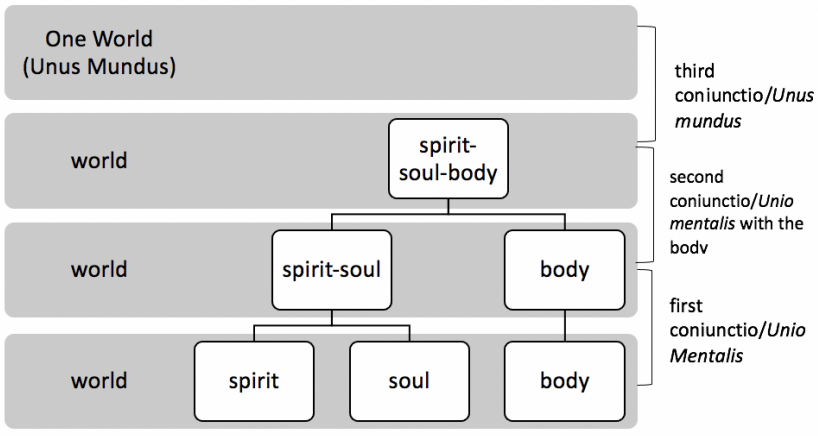


Figure 14. Coniunctio Steps.

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